



# A Catholic Prayer to Honour and Celebrate Matariki

## Processional Song: Canticle of the Sun

*As the processional song is sung, each of these items are carried forward (separately) and placed on the table which has been prepared (attractively) to receive them. Plan beforehand how you want the items to be arranged. In addition to these items, 9 candles are needed. These candles can be different types and sizes, as the stars of Matariki are different sizes. These candles will be used later in the prayer. All readings are taken from The Inclusive Bible.*

**Items to be placed on table;** *cloth, large bowl with dirt or sand (that the candles can later be stood up in), open Bible, potted edible plant, fairy lights*

**Welcome:** *People need to be warmly welcomed to this space and this time of prayer.*

## Introduction: Matariki - an explanation

It is good to contemplate our sense of place in the cosmos. From the earliest humans and still today, people have always taken a keen interest in the starry skies. The constellations have been, and even though we know so much more about them now, still are, a source of wonder. From Psalm 8 we hear, 'When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you set in place, what is humanity that you should be mindful of us? Who are we that you should care for us?' It is difficult to be outside on a starlit night and not be captured by a sense of wonder. The stars have practical uses too, having been used as an aid to navigation and as an indicator of the seasons.

At this time of year, the cluster Matariki, also known as Pleiades, The Seven Sisters or M45 reappears above the horizon, after having dipped below the horizon for some weeks. When this cluster, Matariki, reappeared in the very early morning sky, it signified the beginning of the New Year and people knew it was time to prepare the soil and plant crops. Other meanings were also signified in the setting and rising of this star cluster. As the star cluster set, it was a time to remember those who had died during the past year. As the star cluster rose, it was time to consider the rising of the dead who were now joining the stars of the night sky. It was a time to plan for the future, a time to look forward in hopefulness, a time to be with whanau and friends.

The advent of the New Year holds an important place in the Māori calendar and is rich with meaning. Customs vary among different iwi. While all celebrate the New year, some iwi use the rising of the star Puanga (Rigel), rather than the Matariki cluster, to signify the beginning of the New Year, as the Matariki cluster cannot be easily seen from all localities.

We gather now in love, in aroha to celebrate, be drawn into, and pray over the wonder of this time.



## Opening Prayer

Kia inoi tātou – let us pray. E te Atua, God of the cycles and patterns of the universe and all living things whose ways we only begin to comprehend, open our hearts to the wonder of the natural world, to your incarnation throughout creation, and to your presence with and in us now.

All - Amen

## Remembering

Some weeks ago, the star cluster Matariki set. It did not rise again the next evening. There are people we love, whose lives have set, who have died, and who we miss deeply. You are invited to bring those people to mind now.

Remember their name (*pause*),

their face (*pause*),

their presence (*pause*),

how they blessed you (*pause*),

and how you blessed them (*pause*).

Just as Matariki now rises, let it be a reminder to you, that so too, our loved ones rise to new life.

All – May they rest in peace. Amen.

## Litany of Mercy

**Reader:** E te Atua, generous God, by the light of the Southern stars, te marama o ngā whetu, you guided the great traveller Kupe to this land, Aotearoa, a land teeming with life and steeped in natural wonder.

**All - Response:** You are kind in all your ways, your mercy knows no end.

**Reader:** E te Atua, generous God, by the light of the Southern stars, te marama o ngā whetu, you guided the voyaging waka to this land, Aotearoa, a land rich in food and natural resources.

**All - Response:** You are kind in all your ways, your mercy knows no end.

**Reader:** E te Atua, generous God, by the light of the Southern stars, te marama o ngā whetu, you guided the ship Endeavour and all who followed her to this great land, Aotearoa, a land that nursed the hopes and dreams of many travellers.

**All - Response:** You are kind in all your ways, your mercy knows no end.

**Reader:** E te Atua, generous God, by the light of the Southern stars, te marama o ngā whetu, you guided all who travelled to this great land, Aotearoa, a land abundant with the promise of new beginnings.

**All - Response:** You are kind in all your ways, your mercy knows no end.

**Reader:** And so, rejoicing in your goodness and mercy, we sing.

**A waiata:** Te Aroha, te whakapono, me te rangimārie, tatou tatou e. (x2)

## Reader:

### A Reading from the book of Wisdom 7:16-23 (The Inclusive Bible)

All that we are and all that we say are in God's hands –  
It was God who gave me certainty in understanding the way things are:  
the organization of the universe and the working of the elements;  
the beginning and end of an era, and all that occurs in between;  
the cycles of the solstices and the changing of the seasons;  
the circle of the year and the positions of the stars;  
the nature of animals and the instincts of wild beasts;  
the power of spirits and the thoughts of human beings;  
the uses of plants and the properties of roots.  
Whether it was hidden or apparent, I learned it all,  
for wisdom was my teacher,  
and it was she who designed all these things.

Inside Wisdom, there is a spirit of intelligence and holiness that is unique and unmistakable: subtle, dynamic, perceptive, pristine, unclouded, unconquerable, compassionate, shrewd, compelling, generous and loving toward mortals, faithful, faultless, serene, directing all, knowing all, and pervading every intelligent, pure and most subtle spirit.

Ko te kupu a te Ariki - The Word of the Lord

**ALL:** Whakamoemiti ki te Atua - Thanks be to God

### Psalm 64 (65) *(It would be ideal to sing the Psalm)*

**antiphon:** The seed that falls on good ground, will yield a fruitful harvest.

You care for the Earth, give it water, you fill it with riches.

Your river in heaven brims over to provide its grain.

And thus you provide for the Earth, you drench its furrows  
You soften it with showers, make it level. Thus you bless its growth.

You crown the year with goodness, abundance flows in your steps,  
In the pastures of the wilderness it flows, for you bless its growth.

The hills are girded with joy, the meadows covered with flocks,  
The valleys are decked with wheat. They sing. Yes, they shout for joy.

### A reading from the book of Job 9:2-10 (The Inclusive Bible)

How can we be justified before God?

If I were to argue with God, I couldn't give a right answer once in a thousand times.

God is wise of heart and supremely powerful; who has challenged God and survived?

God moves mountains before they know what is happening,  
and throws them down when angry;

the Almighty shakes the earth and moves it from place to place,

making its support columns tremble.

God commands and the sun doesn't rise and the stars don't shine their light.

God alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the seas.

God made the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the south.

God's deeds are beyond understanding; God's wonders are numberless.

Ko te kupu a te Ariki - The Word of the Lord

**ALL:** Whakamoemiti ki te Atua - Thanks be to God

**Silence:** Observe a time of silence.

**Lighting of nine candles:** *Each lit candle is carried forward (separately and unhurried) in procession and placed upright in the bowl of dirt that has been placed on the table. As it is placed, the reader reads the text indicating what that candle signifies. Quiet music with no words could be played during this time.*

**Reader:** (Introduction) Matariki is a cluster of many stars. This cluster of stars signifies a framework upon which Māori life and the whole yearly cycle of life, was built. It was so important that Māori would acknowledge the appearance of Matariki to signify the end of one year, the end of what had happened in the past, and the beginning of the new year with all its promise, hope, and goodness that the impending season would bring. We light nine candles now and remember as we do name of each of the stars and reflect on that star's significance.

**Response:** 'There is a time for everything, a season for every purpose under heaven: a season to be born and a season to die; a season to plant and a season to harvest. God has made everything in harmony with the divine.' (Ecclesiastes 1)

**The first candle:** Ki a Matariki the great star: Matariki is the star that signifies our connection to the environment, to each other and to the gathering of people. Matariki signifies hope and is also connected to the health and wellbeing of people.

**All:** *'There is a time for everything, a season for every purpose under heaven: a season to be born and a season to die; a season to plant and a season to harvest. God has made everything in harmony with the divine.'* (Ecclesiastes 1)

**The second candle:** Ki a Pōhutukawa. Pōhutukawa is suspended above and is a constant reminder of our treasured loved ones that passed on. May you too come to shine as stars in the night, and sparkle within storehouse of memories forever more.

**All:** *'There is a time for everything, a season for every purpose under heaven: a season to be born and a season to die; a season to plant and a season to harvest. God has made everything in harmony with the divine.'* (Ecclesiastes 1)

**The third candle:** Ki a Waitī, fresh water. Waitī above and Waitī below. The currents of the river swirl, the lakes ripple, and the source of Tāne-te-waiora overflows with life-giving water. Flowing waters are sustenance for the land, vitality for humanity and sustain a food basket for the people.

**All:** *'There is a time for everything, a season for every purpose under heaven: a season to be born and a season to die; a season to plant and a season to harvest. God has made everything in harmony with the divine.'* (Ecclesiastes 1)

**The fourth candle:** Ki a Waitā, salt water. Behold the great expanse that gleams green and blue beneath you. Here is the great current, the long current, the boisterous ocean and the calm ocean, and it is filled with food. Here we find food for all the multitude.



**All:** *'There is a time for everything, a season for every purpose under heaven: a season to be born and a season to die; a season to plant and a season to harvest. God has made everything in harmony with the divine.'* (Ecclesiastes 1)

**The fifth candle:** Ki a Waipuna-ā-rangi, mist and rain. Welcome the misty rain! Welcome the drizzle! Welcome the showers! Welcome the heavy drenching rain! Fall from the spring of the sacred sky, so that the plants grow and the people flourish.

**All:** *'There is a time for everything, a season for every purpose under heaven: a season to be born and a season to die; a season to plant and a season to harvest. God has made everything in harmony with the divine.'* (Ecclesiastes 1)

**The sixth candle:** Ki a Tupuānuku, everything that grows within the soil to be harvested or gathered for food. We till the soil, plant the crops and hail a copious abundance. May the soil be ever fertile, the plants shoot up and grow down to be plentiful.

**All:** *'There is a time for everything, a season for every purpose under heaven: a season to be born and a season to die; a season to plant and a season to harvest. God has made everything in harmony with the divine.'* (Ecclesiastes 1)

**The seventh candle:** Ki a Tupuārangi, associated with everything that grows up in the trees; fruit, berries, birds. The forest is thriving, lush, and bountiful. The crown of the forest is alive with the children of Tane. It gives them food and a place to rest.

**All:** *'There is a time for everything, a season for every purpose under heaven: a season to be born and a season to die; a season to plant and a season to harvest. God has made everything in harmony with the divine.'* (Ecclesiastes 1)

**The eighth candle:** Ki a Ururangi, the star associated with the winds. Let Ururangi not be a fierce and blasting wind, but instead, a gentle caressing wind so we may be revitalized and refreshed.

**All:** *'There is a time for everything, a season for every purpose under heaven: a season to be born and a season to die; a season to plant and a season to harvest. God has made everything in harmony with the divine.'* (Ecclesiastes 1)

**The ninth candle:** Ki a Hiwa-i-te-rangi. Hiwa-i-te-rangi is associated with the granting of our wishes, the realisation of our aspirations for the coming year. A multitude of immense opportunities is before us. We approach these with a determined and longing heart.

**All:** *'There is a time for everything, a season for every purpose under heaven: a season to be born and a season to die; a season to plant and a season to harvest. God has made everything in harmony with the divine.'* (Ecclesiastes 1)

**Silence:** Observe a time of silence. (5 min)

## Song- Waiata. E te Matua Ka Whakawhetai (tune Morning Has Broken)

E te Matua  
Ka whakawhetai  
Mo ngā mea ora  
Mo ngā mea pai.  
Ngā hua rākau  
Ngā hua katoa  
I ruia mai nei  
kia puawai.

*Translation – not for singing*

Father  
Thank you  
For living things  
For all that is good  
Fruit trees  
And their fruit  
That were sown  
And bloom



**Reflection:** *Invite a speaker to give a reflection.*

**Petitions** *Allow a few moments of silence following each petition, so people can internalize the prayer, before the response is said.*

**Reader:** We are called always and everywhere to be concerned about and pray for the needs of the whole world, and so we bring these needs to prayer.

**Silence**

**Response:** *You laid the foundations of the earth; the heavens are the work of your hands.*

**For the Earth our Common Home** – that there will be new efforts care for the natural environment, to protect threatened species and look after Earth's bio-diverse systems.

**Response:** *You laid the foundations of the earth; the heavens are the work of your hands.*

**For the atmosphere that surrounds our planet** – that we will learn how to live more simply, reduce carbon emissions and maintain the climate.

**Response:** *You laid the foundations of the earth; the heavens are the work of your hands.*

**For community leaders** – that they will be guided by Wisdom, strive for communities where all people have what they need and neighbours show concern for one another.

**Response:** *You laid the foundations of the earth; the heavens are the work of your hands.*

**For the growth and production of food and crops** – that sufficient food for all people will be produced by sustainable methods which care for the soil.

**Response:** *You laid the foundations of the earth; the heavens are the work of your hands.*

**For Indigenous peoples** – that their rights and customs be protected and their wisdom valued.

**Response:** *You laid the foundations of the earth; the heavens are the work of your hands.*

**For the beginning of the New Year signified by Matariki** – that celebrating Matariki will bring us closer to the natural world and its rhythms, and deepen our care for nature.

**Response:** *You laid the foundations of the earth; the heavens are the work of your hands.*

**For our selves** – that we will be open to the beauty and loveliness of the natural world, finding it rich with the 'grandeur of God.'

**Response:** *You laid the foundations of the earth; the heavens are the work of your hands.*

**For our loved ones and all who have died** – may they be at peace, at home in the eternal realm, in the company of saints and angels.

**Response:** *You laid the foundations of the earth; the heavens are the work of your hands.*

## Expression of Faith *(from Psalms 46, 96, 74, 104)*

*(Side A)* Matariki is a cluster of stars;

*(Side B)* Let the heavens be glad.

*(Side A)* Matariki is a time of year;

*(Side B)* Let the earth rejoice, let the seas and all that is in them roar.

*(Side A)* Matariki is a time of remembering

*(Side B)* Be still and know that I am God.

*(Side A)* Matariki is a new beginning;

*(Side B)* let the fields and all that is in them exult. Let all the trees of the forests shout for joy.

*(Side A)* Matariki is the eyes of God;

*(Side B)* O God, what variety you have created, arranging everything so wisely. The Earth is filled with your creativity.

*(Side A)* Matariki is a time of seeing

*(Side B)* Both day and night belong to you; you made the starlight and the sun. You set the boundaries of the earth and you made both summer and winter.

*(Side A)* Matariki is a time of rejoicing

*(Side B)* All creatures depend on you to feed them at the proper time. Open your hand, they are well satisfied.



## **Blessing** *(You might like to ask people to bow their heads to receive the blessing.)*

The new light of Matariki has risen!

May it be to you a sign of resurrection and new life.

May it be to you a sign of hope in times of darkness.

May it be to you a sign of the wondrous mystery of Atua who loves you.

May it be to you a sign that the eyes of the Eternal One are ever upon you and that the presence of the Holy One is ever with you. And may this be the cause of your rejoicing. Go in peace.

Through Christ and in the perfect unity of the Holy Spirit, we pray.

**Amen**

## **Song – Wairua Tapu** *by Wiremu Ready*

*Wairua tapu tau mai rā  
wairua tapu mai i runga  
uhia mai ngā taonga pai  
homai tō aroha.*

*Wāhia, kia tika  
akona mai rā kia ū ki te pai  
Horoia, kia mā tonu rā  
mōhou te tino kororia.*

## **Hospitality** – *We extend a warm invitation to everyone to gather now for kai.*

*Traditionally this kai would have been prepared and eaten outside. Each of the following food groups would have been included:*

- kai from the earth*
- kai from a bird (e,g, chicken)*
- kai from fresh water*
- kai from salt water.*



*The Liturgy was prepared by Judith Courtney and Manuel Beazley  
Information has been sourced from '[Living by the Stars](#)' Professor Rangi Matamua  
And [Te Wananga o Aotearoa](#) Matariki guidebook*