

HOLY WEEK 2020

at Home



Prayers, Readings & Devotions
with Spiritual Communion for
Palm Sunday and Easter Day

Compiled by Bishop Brad Billings
Lent 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Holy Week 2020 will be observed by Christians around the world in a way different to that which we have ever experienced this most important week in the life and witness of our faith.

For many, although separated physically from our churches and from one another, there will be the ability to participate in virtual services via platforms like Zoom, and opportunities to be virtually present at a live streamed or downloaded service.

These resources have been developed, not to duplicate what many clergy and parishes are already doing, but to complement them, by providing written texts that can be used by worshippers alone, in their own time and space at home, over the course of Holy Week.

Acknowledgements

Bible readings throughout are from the *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV).

The devotions and accompanying prayers for Monday to Friday of Holy Week were composed by The Revd Dr Peter Adam for the diocesan Prayer Diary App.

Liturgical resources are from *A Prayer Book for Australia* 1995 (The Anglican Church of Australia) and *Common Worship* (The Church of England), except where otherwise acknowledged.

‘An Act of Spiritual Communion’ is from The Church of England.
<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

PALM SUNDAY, 5 April 2020

You may wish to find a space for prayer in front of a cross, a candle, or a special place. You might choose to make your Spiritual Communion at a particular time of day, or after viewing a live streamed service.

Introduction

During Lent people of faith have been preparing by works of love and self-sacrifice for the celebration of our Lord's death and resurrection.

Today, people of Christian faith around the world begin the great week of the Christian year.

This is the day that Christ enters his own city to complete his work as our Saviour, to suffer, to die, and to rise again.

Both as individuals and together, by his Spirit, we journey with him in remembrance and faith, so that, united with him in his sufferings, we may share his risen life.

Sentence

'When the days drew near for him to be taken up, Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem' (Luke 9.51).

The palm Gospel

Matthew 21.1-11

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, "The Lord needs

them.” And he will send them immediately.’ This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

‘Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

‘Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!’

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, ‘Who is this?’ The crowds were saying, ‘This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.’

The palm

If you have a palm or branch, or other symbol... you may wish to pray

God our Saviour,
whose Son Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem as Messiah to suffer and to die;
let this palm/branch be a sign of his victory
and grant that the one who bears it in his name
may ever hail him as King,
and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life. Amen.

A reading and reflection

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.
Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2.5-11).

In this early Christian song, Paul meditates on the eternal, heavenly perspective, which provides a deeper understanding of the life of Christ.

First, we meditate on what the pre-incarnate, then incarnate Christ did. He did not cling to equality with God, he emptied himself, took the form of a slave, was born in human likeness, humbled himself, became obedient to death, even death on a cross.

Then we meditate on what God the Father did. He exalted Christ, gave him the name above every name, so that everyone should bend to him and confess him as Lord [See Isaiah 45:22,23].

What great contrasts between humility and exaltation; between death on a cross, and the universal honouring of Christ, submission to Christ, confession of Christ, and proclamation of Christ.

Do we have the mind of Christ in giving up our status and power, serving others, humbling ourselves, and embracing suffering as Christ's followers? Is this true of our internal attitudes, and evident in our public actions and lives?

Do we have the mind of God in hoping and praying that everyone will bend their knee to Christ, submit to him, and also confess and proclaim him as Lord?

(The Revd Dr Peter Adam).

An Act of Spiritual Communion

Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.' John 6.35.

Reflect on the day and on your relationships.

- What good things have come from God today?
- Where have I fallen short?
- What might I do tomorrow and how might observe I Holy Week this year in these changed circumstances?

You may wish to say or pray

Lord, have mercy.
 Christ, have mercy.
 Lord, have mercy.

Pray for the needs of the world, for your local community, and for those close to you.

Ending with the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done
 on earth as in heaven.
 Give us today our daily bread.
 Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
 Save us from the time of trial
 and deliver us from evil.
 For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
 now and forever. Amen.

Give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with you now.

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me,
 for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
 Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
 I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
 O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Closing prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples,
 'I am with you always'.
 Be with me today, as I offer myself to you.

Hear my prayers for others and for myself,
and keep me in your care. Amen.

and / or

O God,
help me to trust you,
help me to know that you are with me,
help me to believe that nothing can separate me from your love
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK, 6 April 2020

Opening prayer

Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation,
To you be praise and glory for ever.
As a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief
Your only Son was lifted up
That he might draw the whole world to himself.
May I walk this day
And each day this Holy Week
In the way of the cross
And be always ready to share its weight,
Declaring your love for all the world
in thought, word and deed.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reading

John 14.1-6

‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.’ Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.’

Reflection

In the vivid language of John's gospel, the eternal word came down to our world, and was made flesh, and lived among us. Then he was lifted up on the cross, and then lifted up to glory. He came down, that we might rise with him. He came down to reveal the Father, and then returned to his Father's house to prepare a place for us, then to take us to himself.

'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me' [14:5]. He not only teaches the way and provides the way: he himself is the way, the truth, the life. There is no other way, no other truth, no other life.

"Follow me. I am the way and the truth and the life. Without the way there is no going, without the truth there is no knowing, and without the life there is no living. I am the way which you must follow; the truth which you must believe; the life in which you must hope. I am the effective way, the infallible truth, the eternal life." [From Thomas A' Kempis].

(The Revd Dr Peter Adam).

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you are our only way, our only truth, our only life. Help us to believe in you, trust you, and follow you, that you may take us to our Father's home, where you have prepared a place for us forever. Amen.

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK, 7 April 2020

Opening prayer

Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation,
To you be praise and glory for ever.
As a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief
Your only Son was lifted up
That he might draw the whole world to himself.
May I walk this day
And each day this Holy Week
In the way of the cross
And be always ready to share its weight,
Declaring your love for all the world
in thought, word and deed.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reading

John 15.1-11

‘I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in

my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

Reflection

Jesus is the vine, and his disciples are the branches [v.1]. He is not just the trunk or stem, he is the vine. His disciples are part of him, and derive their life from him. [As they are members of his body, and derive their life from their head. See 1 Corinthians 12:12,13, Ephesians 4:1-16].

Jesus is the true vine [v.1]. He fulfils all that God's people Israel were created and called to be [See Isaiah 5]. His disciples must abide in him, and not desert him or revert to Judaism.

The Father is the vinegrower [vv.1,2]. He removes every branch [disciple] that bears no fruit. They are no longer part of the vine; they are cut off from Christ; they wither and are burnt up.

The Father is the vinegrower [vv.1,2]. He prunes every branch [disciple] that does bear fruit, that it may bear more fruit.

To abide in Christ, is to bear much fruit, to let his words abide in us [v.7], to abide in his love [v. 9], and to keep his commandments, especially to love one another [vv. 10,12].

If we abide in Christ, his joy will be in us [v.11].

(The Revd Dr Peter Adam).

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the true vine, and we are your branches. May your words and commands abide in us. May we bear much fruit for your glory, and abide in your love and your joy. Heavenly Father, you are the vinegrower of your Son, the true vine, and we are the branches. Tend your people. Remove branches that bear no fruit, and prune branches that bear fruit, that they may bear more fruit, for your glory. Amen.

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK, 8 April 2020

Opening prayer

Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation,
To you be praise and glory for ever.
As a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief
Your only Son was lifted up
That he might draw the whole world to himself.
May I walk this day
And each day this Holy Week
In the way of the cross
And be always ready to share its weight,
Declaring your love for all the world
in thought, word and deed.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reading

John 16.4b-15

‘I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, “Where are you going?” But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgement: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgement, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

‘I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Reflection

In John’s gospel, ‘grace and truth came through Jesus Christ’ [1:17]; those who continue in Jesus’ word know the truth, and the truth frees them from slavery to sin [8:31-34]; Christ is ‘the way, the truth, and the life’ [14:6]; and he will send ‘the Spirit of Truth’ [16:13]. The Spirit will come to Christ’s disciples, and ‘guide them into all the truth’ [16:13], because they are ‘not yet able to receive it’ [16:12].

So, in context, the promise of this work of the Spirit of Truth was to be fulfilled in the further revelation given after Pentecost to the disciples and apostles, and which results in the New Testament. As we read in Ephesians 2:20, God’s household is ‘built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone’. In doing this the Spirit will glorify Christ, ‘because he will take what is mine and declare it to you’ [16:14]. The fulness of Christ’s revelation is found throughout the New Testament: its words are the words of Christ and his Spirit.

As Christ said to the disciples, ‘Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.’ [Matthew 10:40].

(The Revd Dr Peter Adam).

Prayer

O Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable unto you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MAUNDY THURSDAY, 9 April 2020

Beginning

A candle may be lit.

Blessed are Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe,
Who has sanctified us by Thy Commandments
And commanded us to kindle the festival lights.
Blessed are Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe,
Who hast kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this
season.
May this home be consecrated, O God, by the light of Thy
countenance,
Shining upon us in blessing, and bringing its inhabitants peace.

(Modelled on a traditional Jewish prayer).

Introduction

This is the day when Christ the true Lamb of God have himself
into the hands of those who would kill him.

This is the day when Christ gathered his disciples in the upper
room.

This is the day when Christ took the towel and washed his
disciple's feet, showing us the way to serve others as he himself
serves us.

This is the day when Christ gave us his holy meal, and commanded
us to eat the bread and drink the cup, to proclaim his death until he
comes in glory.

Sentence

‘A new commandment I give you,’ says the Lord, ‘that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.’ (John 13.34).

Reading

John 17

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

‘I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in

the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

‘I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

‘Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.’

Reflection

In his ‘high-priestly’ prayer, Christ prays for his disciples [vv.1-19], and then for those who will believe through their word [vv.20-25]. In his prayer for his disciples, he prays to his Father, ‘Sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth.’ [v.17].

Christ's truth is saving, rescuing truth, gracious truth, life-giving truth. As the Son sets people free from sin's enslavement, so also his truth sets them free [John 8:36,32]. Christ's words are God's words, and 'your word is truth' [v.17].

And Christ links their sanctification with his sanctification: 'For their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth' [v.19]. He sanctifies himself by committing himself to death on the cross, that he may be 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world' [1:29] ; that his flesh may be 'the bread that I will give for the life of the world' [6:51]; that he may be 'the good shepherd' who 'lays down his life for the sheep' [10:11].

As we read in Hebrews, 'It is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' [10:10].

(The Revd Dr Peter Adam).

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you sanctified yourself by going to the cross to suffer in our place. Sanctify us by your broken body and shed blood, that we may serve you in your world, and live with you forever. Amen.

The watch of prayer

It is customary among many Christians to observe, at the conclusion of the Maundy Thursday service, the watch of prayer, recalling Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane on the last night of his life.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be

grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, ‘I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.’ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.’ Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, ‘So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ Again he went away for the second time and prayed, ‘My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.’ Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.’ (Matthew 26.36-46).

Psalm 88 may be said

1 O Lord my God, I call for help by day:
and by night also I cry out before you.
2 Let my prayer come into your presence:
and turn your ear to my loud crying.
3 For my soul is filled with trouble:
and my life has come even to the brink of the grave.
4 I am reckoned among those that go down to the Pit:
I am as one that has no help.
5 I lie among the dead,
like the slain that sleep in the grave:
whom you remember no more,
who are cut off from your power.
6 You have laid me in the lowest Pit:
in darkness and in the watery depths.
7 Your wrath lies heavy upon me:

and all your waves are brought against me.

8 You have put my friends far from me:
and made me to be abhorred by them.

9 I am so fast in prison I cannot get free:
my eyes fail because of my affliction.

10 Lord, I call to you every day:
I stretch out my hands toward you.

11 Will you work wonders for the dead:
or will the shades rise up again to praise you?

12 Shall your love be declared in the grave:
or your faithfulness in the place of destruction?

13 Will your wonders be made known in the dark:
or your righteousness in the land
where all things are forgotten?

14 But to you, Lord, will I cry:
early in the morning my prayer shall come before you.

15 O Lord, why have you rejected me:
why do you hide your face from me?

16 I have been afflicted and wearied from my youth upward:
I am tossed high and low, I cease to be.

17 Your fierce anger has overwhelmed me:
and your terrors have put me to silence.

18 They surround me like a flood all the day long:
they close upon me from every side.

19 Friend and acquaintance you have put far from me:
and kept my companions from my sight.

A period of silent prayer follows.... The service concludes.

GOOD FRIDAY, 10 April 2020

You may wish to find a space for prayer in front of or in view of a cross.

An opening prayer

Eternal God,
in the cross of Jesus
I see the cost of my sin
and the depth of your love:
in humble hope and fear
may I place at his feet
all that I have and all that I am,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The proclamation of the Cross

The Cross of Christ, on which was hung the Saviour of the world.

Holy God,
Holy and strong,
Holy and immortal,
Have mercy upon us.

Reading

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt-offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.' So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt-offering, and set out

and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.' Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, 'Father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' He said, 'The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' Abraham said, 'God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together.

When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.' And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt-offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place 'The Lord will provide'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.'

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the Lord: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth

gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.’
(Genesis 22.1-18).

Reflection

The account of ‘the binding of Isaac’ in Genesis 22 is an extraordinary account of the testing of Abraham’s faith. If Isaac dies, how will God’s promises to Abraham be fulfilled? It is also an extraordinary account of God’s provision.

[Remember that Isaac at this time was not the vulnerable young boy beloved of artists, but a healthy young man, much stronger than his father!]

In place of Isaac, who was to be killed and offered on the altar, God provided the ram, which Abraham then offered ‘as a burnt offering instead of his son’ [v.13]. Abraham believed ‘God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering’ [v.8], and when God did so, named that place ‘The LORD will provide’ [v.14].

This reading is chosen for today, because it points forward to the costly gift of God the Father in giving his Son, and to the sacrifice of Christ in our place. ‘Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us’ [1 Corinthians 5:7]. In words adapted from William Shedd, ‘How wonderful that God allows a sacrifice in our place, how wonderful that he provides that sacrifice, and how wonderful that his Son becomes that sacrifice.’

(The Revd Dr Peter Adam).

Prayer

Gracious and loving heavenly Father, we praise and thank you for providing your Son Jesus Christ to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Help us to trust in your love, your gift, your Son, and to know that we have been redeemed through the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or defect. Give us confidence in your gift, and help us to share this good news throughout the world. For Christ's sake. Amen.

The passion of Christ

Traditionally, the whole of John 18.1 – 19.37, the Passion narrative, is read on Good Friday.

A hymn, for reflection and prayer after reading the Passion narrative

1. O sacred head sore wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down;
O kingly head surrounded
with thorns your only crown;
death's shadows rise before you,
the glow of life decays;
yet hosts of heaven adore you
and tremble as they gaze.

2. What language shall I borrow
to praise you, heavenly friend,
for this your dying sorrow,
your mercy without end?
Such agony and dying!
Such love to sinners free!
O Christ, all grace supplying,
turn now your face on me.

3. In this your bitter Passion,
good Shepherd, think of me,
look on me with compassion,

unworthy though I be:
 beneath your cross abiding
 for ever would I rest,
 in your dear love confiding,
 and with your presence blessed.

4. Lord, be my consolation,
 my shield when death is near;
 remind me of your Passion,
 be with me when I fear.
 My eyes shall then behold you,
 upon your cross shall dwell,
 my heart by faith enfold you;
 and who dies thus, dies well.

Paul Gerhardt 1607–76, from *Salve caput cruentatum*
 attrib. Bernard of Clairvaux 1091–1153
 tr. James Waddell Alexander 1804–

Prayer

Most merciful God,
 Who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ,
 Delivered and saved the world;
 Grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
 all your faithful may triumph in the power of his victory. Amen.

A period of silent prayer follows....

The service concludes.

EASTER EVE, 11 April 2020

The Vigil service on Holy Saturday (Easter Eve) is one of the oldest Christian observances, traditionally commencing after sunset and taking place over the course of the night. The elements of the Vigil include the lighting of a new fire and from it the Easter or Paschal Candle (The Service of Light), the Baptism of new believers and the renewing of baptismal promises by those already baptised, the reading and reflecting on the story of salvation as handed down to us in Holy Scripture, and the Holy Communion.

The service of light

On this most holy night,
when our Lord Jesus Christ passed from death to life,
the Church invites believers throughout the world
to come together in vigil and prayer.
This is the Passover of the Lamb, Jesus Christ.
We remember his death and celebrate resurrection
confident that we shall share his victory
and live with him for ever in God.

Opening prayer

Holy God,
you gave your Name to Moses from the burning bush.
By the blessing of this new light,
bring me to stand with awe on holy ground,
eyes alight with the glory we have seen in Christ,
and heart aflame with resurrection joy,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A candle may be lit.

May the light of Christ, rising in glory,
 dispel the darkness of my heart and mind.
 Thanks be to God.

*Exsultet (traditionally sung by a Deacon, it may be read in a
 reflective way).*

Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels,
 and let your trumpets shout Salvation
 for the victory of our mighty King.

Rejoice and sing now, all the round earth,
 bright with a glorious splendour,
 or darkness has been vanquished by our eternal king.

Rejoice and be glad now, mother church,
 and let your holy courts, in radiant light,
 resound with the praises of your people.

All you who stand near this marvelous and holy flame,
 pray with me to God the Almighty
 for the grace to sing the worthy praise of this great Light;
 through Jesus Christ God's Son our Lord,
 who lives and reigns, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The Ministry of the Word

The Vigil Readings – a selection may be read. It is customary that
 three readings from the Old Testament are read, including Genesis
 1 and Exodus 14.

Genesis 1.1-2.4a, *the Creation*

Genesis 3, *the Fall*

Genesis 22.1-18, *Abraham and Isaac*

Exodus 12.1-24, *the Passover*
 Exodus 14.10-31,15.20-21, *Crossing the Red Sea*
 Isaiah 55.1-11, *a song of deliverance*
 Jeremiah 31.31-34, *a new heart*
 Ezekiel 37.1-14, *the valley of dry bones*
 Zephaniah 3.14-20, *Jerusalem praises God*
 Romans 6.3-11, *new life*
 Matthew 28.1-10, *the Resurrection*

The Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him.

Read and reflect on these words from A Prayer Book for Australia 1995, on Holy Baptism:

Baptism is the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ. When he had risen from the dead, he commanded his followers to go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We have come together today to obey that command. Baptism with water signifies the cleansing from sin that Jesus' death makes possible, and the new life that God gives us through the Holy Spirit. In baptism, the promises of God are visibly signed and sealed for us. We are joined to Christ, and made members of his body, the Church universal.

The renewal of baptismal vows.

I turn to Christ.
 I repent of my sins.
 I reject selfish living, and all that is false and unjust.

I renounce Satan and all evil.

I will, by God's grace, strive to live as a disciple of Christ, loving God with my whole heart, and my neighbour as myself, until my life's end.

A prayer of thanksgiving for the waters of baptism

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ was baptized in the river Jordan,

I thank you for the gift of water that cleanses and revives.

I thank you that through the waters of the Red Sea you led your people out of slavery to freedom in the Promised Land.

I thank you that through the deep waters of death you brought your Son, and raised him to life in triumph.

I thank you that all your servants who are washed in the water of baptism are made one with Christ in his death and in his resurrection, and cleansed and delivered from all sin by his sacrifice made once and for all upon the cross.

The profession of faith

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

A closing prayer

Light of life,
Giver of all good gifts,
Through your unfolding story
Our stories unfold.
In calling us to drink
When we are thirsty
You empower us for our task
To heal the nations.
Brighten this holy night
By your star,
That in the morning
We may meet you
Risen again. Amen.

(The Iona Community).

EASTER DAY, 12 April 2020

You may wish to find a space for prayer in front of a cross, a candle, or a special place. You might choose to make your Spiritual Communion at a particular time of day, or after viewing a live streamed service.

Beginning prayer

Eternal Giver of life and light,
this holy day shines with the radiance of the risen Christ:
renew your Church with the Spirit given in baptism,
that, in spiritual communion with you and with all your people, we
may worship you in sincerity and truth,
and shine as lights in the world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Reading

John 20.1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.’ Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen

wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."' Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Reflection

Mary is confused. Bewildered. So much so she actually encounters the risen Lord himself and supposes him to be the gardener! How easy it is to miss the presence of the Lord in the busyness, and the chaos and confusion, and the noise, of everyday life. Only when Jesus speaks, saying just one word, does it all come together for Mary, and she realises what is happening, and what has just happened.

Jesus said to her, 'Mary.'

Jesus speaks her name. A single word. But from this moment on, nothing will ever be the same again for this courageous woman, who has come alone to the tomb, and remained there, even after Peter and the other (unnamed) disciple have returned to their homes.

Jesus speaks her name, and Mary knows it is him. Even though her brain is no doubt telling her it cannot be him, for he is dead, she has seen it with her own eyes. Jesus on the cross, his broken body taken down from the stake and laid in the tomb, lifeless. But the speaking of that one word, her own name, 'Mary,' cuts through all of the doubt and unbelief, and all of the confusion and incredulity, and goes straight to her heart, enabling her to see with the eyes of faith. And Mary believes. Surely this is what faith is all about – 'the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' (Hebrews 11.1).

All who have come to trust and believe in the saving death and mighty resurrection of Jesus, as people of Easter faith, both now know God and are, importantly, known by God. A son, a daughter, of the living God, who knows your very name, and will one day speak it!

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Peter 1.3).

(Bishop Brad Billings).

An Act of Spiritual Communion

Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'
(John 6.35).

Reflect on the day and on your relationships.

- What good things have come from God today?
- Where have I fallen short?
- What might I do tomorrow?
- How does the resurrection of our Lord change everything?

You may wish to say or pray

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Pray for the needs of the world, for your local community, and for those close to you.

Ending with the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done
 on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
 and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

Give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with you now.

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Closing prayer

All of my problems,
I send to the cross of Christ.
All of my difficulties,
I send to the cross of Christ.
All of the devil's works,
I send to the cross of Christ.
All of my hopes,
I set on the risen Christ;
Thanks be to God. Amen.

SEVEN STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The Stations of the Cross are may be used as a spiritual and devotional resource at any time.

Introduction

The Stations of the Cross have formed part of Christian devotion at Passiontide for many centuries because they enable us to engage actively with the path of suffering walked by Jesus. They originated when early Christians visited Jerusalem and wanted to follow literally in the footsteps of Jesus, tracing the path from Pilate's house to Calvary. They would pause for prayer and devotion at various points. Eventually those pilgrims brought the practice back to their home countries and ever since then Christians of differing traditions have used this form of devotion.

The number of stations has varied immensely through the centuries from as few as five to as many as thirty-six. The now traditional number of fourteen was established by Pope Clement XII in 1731 – nine scriptural stations and a further five based on popular devotion. Owing to the increasing ecumenical popularity of this devotion there have been attempts to create a wholly scriptural set on which to focus. The selection of stations represented here all have their root in the biblical story of Jesus.

Sentences

Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.' (Matthew 16.24-25).

Once we were far off, but now in union with Christ Jesus we have been brought near through the shedding of Christ's blood, for he is our peace. (Ephesians 2.13-14).

Beginning prayer

Almighty and everlasting God,
who in your tender love towards the human race
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
to take upon him our flesh
and to suffer death upon the cross:
grant that I may follow the example of his patience and humility,
and also be made a partaker of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The First Station

In the Garden of Gethsemane

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.' And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, 'Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.' Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss

is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.’ So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, ‘Rabbi!’ and kissed him. Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. (Mark 14.32-46).

Prayer

Merciful God,
 who gave your Son to suffer the shame of the cross:
 save us from hardness of heart,
 that, seeing him who died for us,
 we may repent, confess our sin,
 and receive your overflowing love,
 in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Second Station

Jesus condemned by the Sanhedrin

Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree. Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, ‘We heard him say, “I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands”.’ But even on this point their testimony did not agree. Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, ‘Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?’ But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, ‘Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?’ Jesus said, ‘I am; and “you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power”, and “coming with the clouds of heaven”.’ Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, ‘Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?’ All of them condemned him as deserving death. (Mark 14.55-64).

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were the victim of religious bigotry:
 be with those who are persecuted by small-minded authority.
 You faced the condemnation of fearful hearts:
 deepen the understanding of those who shut themselves off from
 the experience and wisdom of others.
 To you, Jesus, unjustly judged victim,
 be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
 now and for ever. Amen.

The Third Station

Jesus is judged by Pilate

Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!' So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. (Mark 15.14-20).

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you were betrayed and handed over by sinners to
 endure the agonies of the cross:
 be with those who are betrayed and slandered and falsely accused.
 You knew rejection, and the limits of human endurance;
 Be with all who have reached the end of their endurance
 And who feel they can walk no further.
 To you, Jesus, who triumphed over adversity
 and even death itself,

be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. Amen.

The Fourth Station

Jesus carries his cross

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, “Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.” Then they will begin to say to the mountains, “Fall on us”; and to the hills, “Cover us.” For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?’ (Luke 23.26-31).

Prayer

Lord Jesus, the women of Jerusalem wept for you:
move us to tears at the plight of the broken in our world.
You embraced the pain of Jerusalem, the ‘city of peace’:
bless Jerusalem this day and lead it to the path of profound peace.
To you, Jesus, the King of peace who wept for the city of peace,
be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. Amen.

The Fifth Station

Jesus is crucified

And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take. It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge

against him read, ‘The King of the Jews.’ And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, ‘Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!’ In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, ‘He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.’ Those who were crucified with him also taunted him. (Mark 15 24-32).

Prayer

Merciful God,
 who gave your Son to suffer the shame of the cross:
 save us from hardness of heart,
 that, seeing him who died for us,
 we may repent, confess our sin,
 and receive your overflowing love,
 in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Sixth Station

Jesus dies on the cross

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, ‘Listen, he is calling for Elijah.’ And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, ‘Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.’ Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. (Mark 15.33-37).

silence for reflection

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you died on the cross
 and entered the bleakest of all circumstances:
 give courage to those who die at the hands of others.
 In death you entered into the darkest place of all:
 illumine our darkness with your glorious presence.
 To you, Jesus, your lifeless body hanging on the tree of shame,
 be honour and glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
 now and for ever. Amen.

The Seventh Station

Jesus is laid in the tomb

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. (Mark 15.42-46).

Prayer

Most merciful God,
 who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
 delivered and saved the world:
 grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
 we may triumph in the power of his victory;
 through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

PRAYER AND WORSHIP AT HOME IN A TIME OF CRISIS

A prayer for use during the Covid-19 pandemic

Lord Jesus Christ,
Great physician and healer of souls, now give us your peace:
protect those working with the sick and infected,
enable researchers and laboratory staff as they seek and test a cure,
grant swift and complete healing to those infected,
calm the hearts of those fearing the impact of the pandemic on
their own lives,
give your wisdom to leaders of nations and organisations
as they make plans for the people in their care,
be present with all who are lonely and isolated,
comfort those who are dying and those who mourn loved ones.
Through the power of the Holy Spirit enable us
to know you, love you, and place our trust in you,
the God who heals and restores life, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

(St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne).

Worship at home

A collection of resources for prayer and worship at home, from St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne.

- <https://cathedral.org.au/covid19/worship-at-home/>

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