

WALKING THROUGH HOLY WEEK AS FRIENDS OF JESUS

Introduction

In the Gospel according to John, Mary, Martha and Lazarus represent the seed of the beloved community that rises and grows after Jesus' resurrection. Stories about them in John's Gospel seek to reveal to us, the later believers, what disciples of Christ living together in Christian community might look like.

In the scene from Monday's reading (John 12:1–11), we see Mary, Martha and Lazarus extending hospitality to Jesus, welcoming him into their home. This openness of heart is the key to belief and the essence of faith.

Then the anointing of Jesus' feet by Mary is an example of devotion and a kind of faith profession. The writing is on the wall, so to speak, Jesus' death is imminent. But the way of self-giving love is hard to accept and even harder to live—as we will see in the days that follow for the disciples of Jesus. Yet Mary understands and willingly surrenders herself to the path of sacrificial love. Mary is a true believer, a beloved friend of Jesus.

As we move through Holy Week, what will it mean for us to express hospitality to Jesus? to open our hearts and minds to his love and his way? I pray our devotion to and friendship with Jesus will grow and strengthen.

About the Scripture Readings

Since we will not be gathered for worship on Good Friday, I have chosen to veer somewhat from the lectionary readings for this week in order that we might hear more of the narrative over these days.

On Good Friday, you might choose to read the whole of John 18:1—19:37 rather than limiting your reading to the selection in this resource.

Suggestions for Using this Prayer Resource

You might set aside a time and space each day for your prayer. Perhaps place objects in your space to help facilitate your prayer such as a purple cloth, a candle, an icon, or a cross. Alternatively, find symbols that reflect the passion narrative as you know it (flask of perfume, coins, rocks, cross etc.) and arrange them before you.

Finally, I encourage you to make space *in yourself* as you pray. Begin with several moments of silence. Allow yourself time to take in the verse from the psalm and the image. When you read the day's scripture, feel free to pause if a word or sentence moves you. The Spirit is our guide, the content on the pages merely conversation starters between yourself and God.

The peace of Christ be with you on the journey.

Christine

Monday of Holy Week

How precious
is your steadfast love, O God!
All people take refuge
in the shadow of your wings.

—Psalm 36:7



John 12:1–11

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was

a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me." When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death as well, since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus.

Self-emptying God:
may my heart be hospitable
and my life wide-open to receive you as you are,
not only as I wish you to be.
In these days of recollection
when my thoughts turn to your suffering in Jerusalem,
help me to experience anew the path of self-giving love
which you lived and which I seek to follow.
May I devote myself wholly to you—
holding nothing back out of fear
or doubt
or selfish ambition.

Amen

Tuesday of Holy Week

Upon you I have leaned
from my birth;
It was you who took me
from my mother's womb.
My praise is continually of you.

—Psalm 71:6



John 13:21–32

After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, “Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.” The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him; Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him.

Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.” Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the festival”; or, that he should give something to the poor. So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.”

Holy Friend:
you give yourself to me
without condition or expectation.
Strengthen my faith
that I might not turn from you
or stray from your side.
May I be your beloved disciple,
leaning in, listening, and loving
even though I cannot fully understand
the deep mysteries of your way.

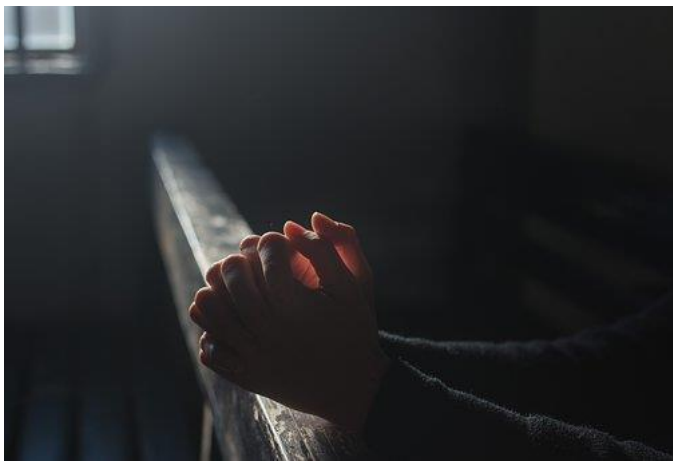
Amen

Wednesday of Holy Week

Be pleased, O God,
to deliver me.

O Lord, make haste to help me!

—Psalm 70:1



John 18:1–12

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, “Whom are you looking for?” They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus replied, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, “I am he,”

they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, “Whom are you looking for?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.” This was to fulfil the word that he had spoken, “I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.” Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?” So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him.

Holder and Keeper of my life:
I confess I can be like Peter at times—
responding with impulse and fear,
taking matters into my own hands,
acting out of limited insight and wisdom.

Fill me with trust
and confidence in you alone.
Give me courage to remain
steadfast and true
to the way of love and peace.

Amen

Thursday of Holy Week —

Prove me, O God, and try me;
test my heart and mind.
For your steadfast love
is before my eyes,
and I walk in faithfulness to you.

—Psalm 26:2, 3



John 18:28–40

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate’s headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?” They answered, “If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.” The Jews replied, “We are not permitted to put anyone to death.” (This was to fulfil what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.) Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?” Pilate replied, “I am not a Jew, am I?”

Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?” Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.” Pilate asked him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” Pilate asked him, “What is truth?” After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, “I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” They shouted in reply, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a bandit.

You who are the truth and the life:
enable me to hear your voice
through the din of mindless chatter
and the wayward cries of this world.
Open the gates of your kingdom within me.
Shine the light of your love before me.
Help me take another step
deeper into your will.

Amen

Friday of Holy Week

On you I was cast from my birth,
and since my mother bore me
you have been my God.
Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is no one to help.

—Psalm 22:10, 11



John 19:16b–30

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews", but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews."' Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.'

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.'

This was to fulfil what the scripture says, 'They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.'

And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Crucified Saviour, naked God:
like your mother and disciple
standing beneath the cross,
I dare to look, to take in
the injustice and suffering of this world.
Do not let me turn away from you.

Amen

Saturday of Holy Week

In you, O God, I seek refuge;
do not let me ever be put to shame;
in your righteousness deliver me.
Incline your ear to me;
rescue me speedily.
Be a rock of refuge for me,
a strong fortress to save me.

—Psalm 31:1, 2



John 19:31–42

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, ‘None of his bones shall be broken.’ And again another passage of scripture says, ‘They will look on the one whom they have pierced.’

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Dear Jesus,
your body is in the ground
like a seed
waiting to break open,
to rise and bear fruit.
I will wait with you
in this dark and fertile space
for love to have its way in me.

Amen

Tree of life and awesome mystery

Marty Haugen

Tree of life and awesome mystery,
In your death we are reborn,
Though you die in all of history,
still you rise with every morn,
Still you rise with every morn.

Seed that dies to rise in glory,
May we see ourselves in you,
If we learn to live your story,
We may die to rise anew,
we may die to rise anew.

We remember truth one spoken,
love passed on through act and word,
Every person, lost and broken
wears the body of our Lord,
wears the body of our Lord.

Gentle Jesus, mighty Spirit,
come inflame our hearts anew,
We may all your joy inherit,
if we bear the cross with you,
if we bear the cross with you.

Christ you lead and we shall follow,
stumbling though our steps may be,
One with you in joy and sorrow,
we the river you the sea,
we the river you the sea.

When I survey the wondrous cross

Isaac Watts

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Sacred Spaces

During this week, you might like to visit a set-apart space for prayer and contemplation.

The labyrinth at the Waite Arboretum
Walter Young Avenue
Urrbrae SA 5064

The labyrinth is located on the original site of Peter Waite's tennis courts, overlooking the Rose Garden.

Stations of the Cross at The Monastery
15 Cross Road
Urrbrae SA 5064

Written guide and meditations available for download onto your phone.