



Holy Week Prayer 2008

Call to Prayer:

My sisters, let us prepare to celebrate the sacred mysteries of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. By our prayer and meditation, may we open ourselves to the cycle of suffering love, desolated emptiness, and unexpected life to which Holy Week invites us annually. In the depths of these days there is wisdom accumulated through all the ages of human history. May our time together break open some of that richness. Amen.

Holy Thursday

*Peace is my parting gift to you,
my own peace, such as the world cannot give.*

Hymn: *Dona Nobis Pacem*

Reading: John 16:25-33

Psalm 67:

1. Be gracious to us, O God! Show us your smiling face!
 2. The world will honor your ways. People will know your transforming saving power.
 1. All people will praise you. And you will accept the praise offered to you.
 2. The whole world is joyful. You discern justice and work compassionately while teaching.
 1. You champion equality and mentor all who care to follow you.
 2. May you continue your nurturing of the world and be praised by every creature.
- All:** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

adapted by Barbara J. Monda

Hymn: *Dona Nobis Pacem*

Good Friday

Jesus was now taken in charge and, carrying his own cross, went out to the Place of the Skull, as it is called (or, in the Jews' language, 'Golgotha'), where they crucified him....

Reading: *Bell*

Since time flies one way like an arrow,
the sugar can't be stirred out of your oatmeal
and no matter how long the murderer sobs
on the median strip—sorry!—he can't reverse
his swerve, cannot rescind his drink

before the crash. Like him, was Jesus heartsick
to find history's not a zipper running both ways?
He who loved eternity—its roominess,
its reversibility—as he grew up, did he
have to learn he never could unsay a thing

he'd said? And yet today, like all Good Fridays,
He hangs on the cross again. On altars
he hangs. On necklaces, His death is like an x
that rides the wheels of time to come again
in ritual, that miniature eternity, that spring

re-sprung. Dear God, there in your big eternity,
remember that your hands and feet can never
be unscarred again. Hear these words spoken
by a body that suffers, by a tongue
that will stiffen soon and be gone.

Have mercy on us who love time.
May this prayer be a tire
that rolls over every inch of the way
to find You. May it be a bell
which can never be unrung.

Jeanne Murray Walker
Good Friday, 2004

Period of Silence

The Litany of Reconciliation:

Leader: To end the hatred that divides nations, races, classes, people of different sexual orientation, men and women—

All: *Fling the vast flood of your mercy on our resistance.*

L: To end our covetous desire as a nation to possess what is not our own—

A: *Fling the vast flood of your mercy on our resistance.*

L: To end the greed that exploits the work of human hands and lays waste to the earth—

A: *Fling the vast flood of your mercy on our resistance.*

L: To end our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee—

A: *Fling the vast flood of your mercy on our resistance.*

L: To end the lust that dishonors the bodies of women, men and children—

A: *Fling the vast flood of your mercy on our resistance.*

adapted from a Litany found in the Washington National Cathedral, Chapel of the Cross of Nails, and a line from Denise Levertov

Let us Pray:

Lord Jesus, stretch your wounded hands in blessing over your people, to heal and restore, to correct our ways, and to draw us to yourself and to one another in love. Amen.

Take a few minutes now to write on your cross whatever you wish to unite to the sacrifice of Christ. Please take your cross to the fire.

Music: *Kol Nidre*

Richard Locker, cello, Max Bruch, composer
from the album *Jewish Cello Masterpieces*, 2002

Holy Saturday

*Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed.
But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remained sitting there, facing the tomb.*

Reading: *Mary Magdalene, Holy Saturday*

No more, my Lord, my life, to know
the hollows of your face,
nor trace with contemplating eyes
the head so touched with grace
that sorrow set great beauty there.
No more my lips to meet
the wounds of hands, nor bend my hair
to those thin, road-worn feet
adored. O buried Lord! To grieve
as light-forsaken day
with these my hands, poor withered leaves
the tree has cast away.

June Miller

Silent Reflection

Litany: *Mother of Sorrows*

Solace of shock, *pray for us*

Healer of grief, *pray for us*

Absorber of tears, *pray for us*

Protector of children, *pray for us*

Peace of the terrified, *pray for us*

Home of the lost, *pray for us*

Inspirer of courage, *pray for us*

Strengtheners of faith, *pray for us*

Peace of the terrified, *pray for us*

Home of the lost, *pray for us*

Song of the brave, *pray for us*

Rest for the tired, *pray for us*

Forgiver of our enemies, *pray for us*

Guardian of our enemies' children, *pray for us*

Way to the future, *pray for us*

Queen of peace, *pray for us*

M. Therese Casey

Hymn: *Tree of Life*

1. Tree of life and awesome myst'ry,
in your death we are reborn;
Though you die in all of hist'ry,
still you rise with ev'ry morn,
still you rise with ev'ry morn.
2. 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.
3. We remember truth once spoken,
love passed on in act and word;
Every person lost and broken
wears the body of our Lord.
4. Gentle Jesus, Mighty Spirit,
come inflame our hearts anew,
We may all your joy inherit
if we bear the cross with you.
5. 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.

THOMAS 87.87.7.

Marty Haugen

Easter

...on the Sunday morning very early they came to the tomb
bringing the spices they had prepared.

Psalm 118.21-23:

1. I thank you that you have answered me
 2. and have become my salvation.
 1. The stone that the builders rejected
 2. has become the chief cornerstone.
 1. This is the Lord's doing;
 2. it is marvelous in our eyes.
- All:** This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Reading: John 20.11-18

Communal Reflection

Prayers of the Faithful:

Response: *Mysterious God, hear our prayer.*

Collect: (All)

Christ is risen from the dead,
trampling down death by death,
and upon those in the tombs
bestowing life.
Let us give thanks. Amen.

Closing Hymn: *Sing with All the Saints*

Sing with all the saints in glory,
Sing the resurrection song!
Death and sorrow, earth's dark story,
To the former days belong.
All around the clouds are breaking,
Soon the storms of time shall cease;
In God's likeness, we awaken,
Knowing everlasting peace.

O what glory, far exceeding
All that eye has yet perceived!
Holiest hearts for ages pleading,
Never that full joy conceived.
God has promised, Christ prepares it,
There on high our welcome waits;
Ev'ry humble spirit shares it,
Christ has passed the eternal gates.

Life eternal! heav'n rejoices;
Jesus lives who once was dead;
Shout with joy, O deathless voices!
Child of God, lift up your head!
Patriarchs from distant ages,
Saints all longing for their heaven,
Prophets, psalmists, seers, and sages,
All await the glory giv'n.

Life eternal! O what wonders
Crowd on faith; what joy unknown,
When, amidst earth's closing thunders,
Saints shall stand before the throne!
O to enter that bright portal,
See that glowing firmament,
Know, with you, O God immortal,
"Jesus Christ whom you have sent!"

Cover: *The Women Find Jesus' Tomb Empty* by Maurice Denis, 1894
In *Search for Mary Magdalene: A Journey Through Art and Literature*. Jane Lahr.
Welcome Books, New York, 2006. p 219.

Prayer Service composed by Mary Aquin O'Neill, RSM

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Mount Saint Agnes Theological Center for Women
www.mountsaintagnes.org
tel: 410.435.7500 ~ fax: 410.435.9522
P. O. Box 10484 ~ Baltimore, Maryland 21209