

St Matthew's Westminster



Spiritual Resources for Holy Week

Sunday 28th March – Saturday 3rd April 2021

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Introduction

Holy Week observances began in Jerusalem in the earliest days of the Church, when devout people travelled to Jerusalem at Passover to re-enact the events of the week leading up to the Resurrection.

Egeria was a Christian who travelled widely during the period of 381-385 and wrote about Christian customs and observances in Egypt, Palestine, and Asia Minor. She described how religious tourists to Jerusalem re-enacted the events of Holy Week. On Palm Sunday afternoon, the crowds waved palm fronds as they made a procession from the Mount of Olives into the city. Of course, the observances must have begun quite a number of years before Egeria witnessed them, or they wouldn't have been so elaborate. Holy Week observances spread to Spain by the fifth century, to Gaul and England by the early seventh century, and eventually to Rome in the twelfth century. Egeria's description is important as it is the earliest we still have. The tourists took the customs home with them.

Holy Week is the same in the eastern and western Church, but because eastern Christians use the Julian Calendar to calculate Easter, the celebrations occur at different times. However, the following events in the week before Easter are the same, east and west, relative to the date of Easter:

- Palm Sunday, the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem.
- Maundy Thursday, the institution of the Holy Eucharist and the betrayal by Judas.
- Good Friday, the arrest, trial, crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus Christ.
- Holy Saturday, the Sabbath on which Jesus rested in the grave.

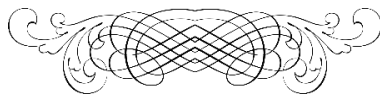
Reflection and Prayer for the Day

Palm Sunday: *March 28th*

A Sonnet for Palm Sunday

Now to the gate of my Jerusalem,
The seething holy city of my heart,
The saviour comes. But will I welcome him?
Oh crowds of easy feelings make a start;
They raise their hands, get caught up in the singing,
And think the battle won. Too soon they'll find
The challenge, the reversal he is bringing
Changes their tune. I know what lies behind
The surface flourish that so quickly fades;
Self-interest, and fearful guardedness,
The hardness of the heart, its barricades,
And at the core, the dreadful emptiness
Of a perverted temple. Jesus come
Break my resistance and make me your home.

Malcolm Guite (b 1957)



Prayer

O Lord, who on this day entered the rebellious city that later rejected you:
we confess that our wills are as rebellious as Jerusalem's,
that our faith is often more show than substance,
that our hearts are in need of cleansing.
Have mercy on us, son of David, Saviour of our lives.
Help us to lay at your feet
all that we have and all that we are, trusting you
to forgive what is sinful,
to heal what is broken,
to welcome our praises,
and to receive us as your own.

Fig Monday: *March 29th*

The second day of Holy Week is properly known as "Holy Monday," but in the Middle Ages, it came to be nicknamed "Fig Monday," because the Bible tells of how Jesus preached on the power of prayer under a barren fig tree on the day after his entry into Jerusalem.

The Cross is the word through which God has responded to evil in the world. Sometimes it may seem as though God does not react to evil, as if he is silent. And yet, God has spoken, he has replied, and his answer is the Cross of Christ: a word which is love, mercy, forgiveness. It also reveals a judgment, namely that God, in judging us, loves us. Remember this: God, in judging us, loves us. If I embrace his love then I am saved, if I refuse it, then I am condemned, not by him, but my own self, because God never condemns, he only loves and saves.

Pope Francis

Jesus comes near and he beholds the city
And looks on us with tears in his eyes,
And wells of mercy, streams of love and pity
Flow from the fountain whence all things arise.
He loved us into life and longs to gather
And meet with his beloved face to face
How often has he called, a careful mother,
And wept for our refusals of his grace,
Wept for a world that, weary with its weeping,
Benumbed and stumbling, turns the other way,
Fatigued compassion is already sleeping
Whilst her worst nightmares stalk the light of day.
But we might waken yet, and face those fears,
If we could see ourselves through Jesus' tears.

Malcolm Guite (b 1957)

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love
on the hard wood of the Cross that everyone might come
within the reach of your saving embrace.
So clothe your Church with the Holy Spirit,
that we, reaching forth our hands in love,
may bring those who do not know you to faith in your saving love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

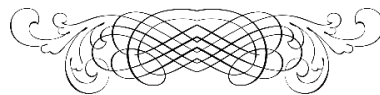
Temple Tuesday: *March 30th*

The significance of Holy Tuesday is not easily grasped. In a single day, Jesus would simultaneously condemn the religious authorities while confirming his deity. The cleansing of the Temple caused the Pharisees to question Jesus' right to do "these things." Jesus had not received his authority from the religious leaders . . . so they wanted answers.

Cleansing the Temple

Come to your Temple here with liberation
And overturn these tables of exchange
Restore in me my lost imagination
Begin in me for good, the pure change.
Come as you came, an infant with your mother,
That innocence may cleanse and claim this ground
Come as you came, a boy who sought his father
With questions asked and certain answers found,
Come as you came this day, a man in anger
Unleash the lash that drives a pathway through
Face down for me the fear the shame the danger
Teach me again to whom my love is due.
Break down in me the barricades of death
And tear the veil in two with your last breath.

Malcolm Guite (b 1957)



Prayer

We give glory to you, Lord,
who raised up your cross to span the jaws of death
like a bridge by which souls might pass
from the region of the dead to the land of the living.
We give glory to you who put on the body of a single mortal human
and made it the source of life for every other mortal human.

St Ephrem of Edessa (306-373)

Spy Wednesday: March 31st

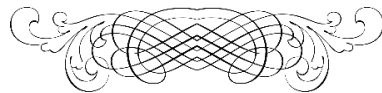
Spy Wednesday gets its name because this is the day on which Judas betrayed Jesus to the Sanhedrin. Because Judas is thought to be duplicitous, his actions conjured up the image of a spy. The synoptic gospels all include an account of the betrayal.

The Anointing at Bethany

Come close with Mary, Martha , Lazarus
So close the candles stir with their soft breath
And kindle heart and soul to flame within us
Lit by these mysteries of life and death.
For beauty now begins the final movement
In quietness and intimate encounter
The alabaster jar of precious ointment
Is broken open for the world's true lover,

The whole room richly fills to feast the senses
With all the yearning such a fragrance brings,
The heart is mourning but the spirit dances,
Here at the very centre of all things,
Here at the meeting place of love and loss
We all foresee, and see beyond the cross.

Malcolm Guite (b 1957)



Prayer

Anima Christi

Jesus, may all that is you flow into me.
May your body and blood be my food and drink.
May your passion and death be my strength and life.
Jesus, with you by my side enough has been given.
May the shelter I seek be the shadow of your Cross.
Let me not run from the love which you offer,
But hold me safe from the forces of evil.
On each of my dyings shed your light and your love.
Keep calling to me until that day comes,
When, with your saints, I may praise you for ever. Amen.

David Fleming SJ

Maundy Thursday: April 1st

Maundy is derived from the Latin word for 'command,' and refers to Jesus' commandment to the disciples to 'Love one another as I have loved you.' On this day we commemorate the Last Supper of Our Lord, which instituted the Holy Eucharist.

Maundy Thursday

Here is the source of every sacrament,
The all-transforming presence of the Lord,
Replenishing our every element
Remaking us in his creative Word.
For here the earth herself gives bread and wine,
The air delights to bear his Spirit's speech,
The fire dances where the candles shine,
The waters cleanse us with His gentle touch.
And here He shows the full extent of love
To us whose love is always incomplete,
In vain we search the heavens high above,
The God of love is kneeling at our feet.
Though we betray Him, though it is the night.
He meets us here and loves us into light.

Malcolm Guite (b 1957)

A Prayer of Response

Your commands are not burdensome,
your way of life our example,
your footsteps there to be found.
'Love one another; care for children,
brothers, sisters and outcasts.
If you are my disciples,
then show the world,
demonstrate your discipleship
and love both lovely and unloved.
Show God's Grace to this world!
And as we open our hearts and lives,
and follow as you have shown,
others discover you through our words,
and by the life we share.
For the love you have given us,
and the blessings you have shown us,
we thank you, God of Love and Grace. Amen.

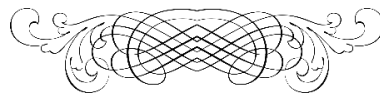
Good Friday: April 2nd

The term 'Good Friday' does not actually mean that the Friday in question was good, positive or nice. Used in this context, the word 'Good' carries the same meaning as the original Old English word, in that it means holy. Thus, this day is also referred to as Holy Friday. However, we argue that the day of Christ's crucifixion was good in its way, because it was the day that Christ died on the cross for the redemption of the world.

He Bore Our Grievs

No, it was not the Jews who crucified,
Nor who betrayed You in judgment place,
Nor who, Lord Jesus, spat into Your face,
Nor who with buffets struck You as You died.
No, it was not the soldiers fisted bold
Who lifted up the hammer and nail,
Or raised the cursed cross on Calvary's hill,
Or, gambling, tossed the dice to win Your robe.
I am the one, O Lord, who brought You there,
I am the heavy cross You had to bear,
I am the rope that bound You to the tree,
The whip, the nail, the hammer, and the spear,
The blood-stained crown of thorns You had to wear:
It was my sin, alas, it was for me.

Jacobus Revius (1586-1658)



A Prayer of St Richard of Chichester

Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the many benefits which thou hast won for me,
for all the cruel pains and insults which thou hast borne for me.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
and follow thee more nearly, day by day.
Amen.

Holy Saturday: April 3rd

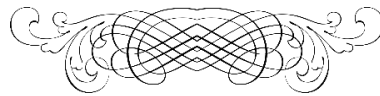
Holy Saturday is a day of waiting and preparing as Mary did near the tomb of her son. It is a day without liturgy, caught as between two waves of the sea. While Mary did not really know what would happen next, there was a sense of anticipation that there is more to come; a sense we need to keep with us today. We can identify with her in our own waiting.

A Poem for Holy Saturday

A curiously empty day,
As if the world's life
Had gone underground.
The April sun
Warming dry grass
Makes pale spring promises
But nothing comes to pass.

Anger
Relaxes into despair
As we remember our helplessness,
Remember him hanging there.
We have purchased the spices
But they must wait for tomorrow.
We shall keep today
For emptiness
And sorrow.

Elizabeth Rooney



Prayer

Almighty, ever-living God,
whose only-begotten Son descended to the realm of the dead,
and rose from there to glory, grant that your faithful people,
who were buried with him in baptism, may,
by his resurrection, obtain eternal life.
We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Reading for the Day

Palm Sunday: *March 28th*

Christ Jesus, 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 2.6-11

Fig Monday: *March 29th*

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? One thing I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple. I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Psalms 27.1,4,13-14

Temple Tuesday: *March 30th*

Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, where are you going?' Jesus answered, 'Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterwards.' Peter said to him, 'Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.' Jesus answered, 'Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times.'

John 13.36-38

Spy Wednesday: *March 31st*

When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.' And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, 'Surely not I, Lord?' He answered, 'The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been

born.' Judas, who betrayed him, said, 'Surely not I, Rabbi?' He replied, 'You have said so.'

Matthew 26.20-25

Maundy Thursday: *April 1st*

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11.23-26

Good Friday: *April 2nd*

Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4.14-16

Holy Saturday: *April 3rd*

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

Romans 6.3-5

Spiritual Communion

During this second national lockdown all public acts of worship have been suspended. This means that many people who would have received Holy Communion each Sunday, and some of them every day, are not able to receive the comfort and benefits of the sacrament.

This is a huge loss. However, it is not the first time that the Church has been in such a position. Throughout Christian history some Christian people have found themselves isolated from the sacramental life of the Church for all sorts of reasons, and particularly in times of plague, famine and warfare.

At such times the Church has encouraged people to make what is called a Spiritual Communion. It is a way of uniting yourself with Jesus and entering into communion with him even though you are not able to receive the sacrament itself.

The prayer that follows draws on the story of the woman who comes to Jesus but only touches the hem of his garment. She still receives healing and blessing (See St Mark 5. 25-34). In a way, spiritual communion is like this. We are not able to receive the sacramental bread and wine. But in a spiritual communion we still come to Jesus and he still receives us.

Act of Spiritual Reception

O loving God, in union with Christian people throughout the world and across the centuries gathered to make Eucharist, hearing your holy Word and receiving the Precious Body and Blood of your dear Son, I offer you praise and thanksgiving.

Even though I am exiled from tasting the Bread of Heaven and drinking the Cup of Life I pray that you will unite me with all the baptised and with your Son who gave his life for us.

Come Lord Jesus, dwell in me and send your Holy Spirit that I may be filled with your presence.

The Angelus

for which the church bell rings out daily at the beginning of the day, at noon, and at the start of evening, recalling the centrality of the Incarnation.

The angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary:
and she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessèd art thou among women, and blessèd is the
fruit of thy womb Jesus.

**Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death.**

Behold, the handmaid of the Lord:
be it unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessèd art thou among women, and blessèd is the
fruit of thy womb Jesus.

**Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death.**

And the Word was made flesh:
and dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessèd art thou among women, and blessèd is the
fruit of thy womb Jesus.

**Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death.**

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God:
that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Almighty God, pour thy grace into our hearts;
that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ
by the message of an angel, so by his ✠ Cross and Passion
we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection;
through the same Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Simple Form of Morning Prayer

Opening Sentences

✠ In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

O Lord, open our lips;
and we shall praise your name.

Let your ways be known upon earth,
your saving help among the nations.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Opening Prayer

Banish, O Lord, all darkness from our hearts and minds,
through Christ, the Dayspring from on high,
who fulfilled your ancient promise
that we should find our freedom in your peace;
for all ages belong to you,
yesterday, today and for ever. **Amen.**

Scripture Reading

Taken from the daily readings found on pages [10-11](#)

The Gospel Canticle | Benedictus

Refrain: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

✠ Blessèd be the Lord, the God of Israel:
who has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of his servant, David.
Through his holy prophets, God promised of old
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us;
to show mercy to our ancestors,
and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath God swore to our father, Abraham,
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight, all the days of our life.
And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.

Prayers

- Give thanks for a new day, for all God's blessings.
- Pray for those we will encounter today, and those far from us.
- Pray for the blessing of peace for all nations and people.
- Pray that our time may be consecrated by the presence of Christ.

Collects

Weekdays from Palm Sunday until Good Friday

True and humble King,
the crowd hailed you as Messiah
then turned against you:
may our praise last longer than a day;
may we be found beside you
on the way of the cross,
which is the path of glory.

Good Friday

Almighty God,
as we stand at the foot of the cross of your Son,
may we know your love for us,

that in humility, love and joy
we may place at his feet
all that we have and all that we are;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Easter Eve

In the depths of our isolation
we cry to you, Lord God:
give light in our darkness
and bring us out of the prison of our despair;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A Morning Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
we thank you that you have brought us safely
to the beginning of this day.
Keep us from falling into sin
or running into danger,
order us in all our doings
and guide us to do always
what is righteous in your sight;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Conclusion

May God our Redeemer show us compassion and love. **Amen.**

✠ Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

A Simple Form of Evening Prayer

Opening Sentences

✠ O God, come to our aid:
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.

The Blessing of Light

Blessèd are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers,
creator of the changes of day and night,
giving rest to the weary,
renewing the strength of those who are spent,
bestowing upon us occasions of song in the evening.
As you have protected us in the day that is past,
so be with us in the coming night;
keep us from every sin, every evil, and every fear;
for you are our light and salvation,
and the strength of our life.

Blessèd be God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Blessèd be God for ever.

Scripture Reading

Taken from the daily readings found on pages [10-11](#)

The Gospel Canticle | Magnificat

Refrain: Come, let us return to the Lord,
for our God will richly pardon.

✠ My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
He has looked with favour on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
The Almighty has done great things for me
and holy is his name.
He has mercy on those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm
and has scattered the proud in their conceit.
Casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
He has come to the aid of his servant, Israel,
to remember his promise of mercy,
the promise made to our ancestors;
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Come, let us return to the Lord,
for our God will richly pardon.

Prayers

- Give thanks for the day past, for the means of grace and the hope of glory.
- Pray for all who are in need, for those who are sick in body, mind or spirit.
- Pray for those who have died, those we have loved,
those who have inspired us.
- As the day fades we commend ourselves to the love and mercy of God.

Collects

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed: Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Evening Prayer may conclude with the Antiphon

Ave, Regina caelorum

Hail, O Queen of Heaven
Welcome, O Queen of Heaven.
Welcome, O Lady of Angels
Hail! thou root, hail! thou gate
From whom unto the world, a light has arisen:
Rejoice, O glorious Virgin,
Lovely beyond all others,
Farewell, most beautiful maiden,
And pray for us to Christ.

V. Allow me to praise thee, O sacred Virgin.

R. Against thy enemies give me strength.

Grant unto us, O merciful God, a defence against our weakness, that we who remember the holy Mother of God, by the help of her intercession, may rise from our iniquities, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Contact Details

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