

TACOMA, WASHINGTON

HOUSEHOLD WORSHIP

Good Friday
April 10, 2020

Discerning suffering in our midst

If ever there were ever a time when the Christian people need the church's liturgy, it is during these Three Days as the world, the nation, and our parish community confront the grim calculus of pandemic suffering and death. Perhaps it might be better to say: we need the liturgy that reveals to us the Holy Three who are with us, who embrace the suffering of the world, and who strengthen the many caring for the sick, often under horrific conditions, the many who easing the suffering of the dying. To those who will receive it, the Holy Three offer wisdom and strength in the search for a vaccine, in the many attempts to give accurate medical advice, and in care for vulnerable neighbors in distress.

The grim news that floods the Internet, our televisions, and airways can be overwhelming, but should not distract us from this core Christian conviction: *God is with us; God is with our neighbors throughout the city, the nation, and the world, in the midst of anxiety, fear, and suffering.* We need remember that God – our merciful father, our loving mother – endured the pain of watching the Son, Jesus Christ, suffer and die, abandoned by many of his followers. For those who imagine that Christian faith nurtures a naive optimism about life in the world or



promises an escape from this world into a Neverland in the Sky, join us as we worship the One who in *this world* faced death and in its midst entrusted himself to the mercy and power of God. *Into whose hands are we entrusting ourselves today?*

The ancient term for this one liturgy spread over three days is the Triduum (Latin for “three days”). Beginning with Maundy Thursday, April 9, it continues on April 10, Good Friday. The modifier, *good*, has been traced by modern linguists to an older sense of the word, meaning “pious” or “holy.” Eastern Orthodox believers simply call this day *Great Friday*. As with all feast days in the Christian year, **the keeping of Good Friday asks Christians how the commemoration of the Lord's Passion speaks to our current need and situation.** If anything, we recognize that Jesus was put to death because he promoted the reign of God's love and justice, forgiveness and healing within a violent empire that viewed acts of mercy and works of justice for the many as pathologies. His political executioners thought his death would silence him. Little could they have imagined that God had something else in store.

Preparation

For centuries, Good Friday has been marked by a **eucharistic** and a **domestic fast**: no celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and the keeping of the fast throughout Friday until Saturday evening when Easter officially begins. A Christian fast is one modest meal with two snacks during the day, either a piece of fruit or vegetable. Money saved in fasting is to be given to those in need, especially those who are hungry. A clear bareness marks this day: **flowers are absent** from the home though green or barren branches are welcomed; a **crucifix** is placed on the table where one will pray or on the wall where it can be easily seen during prayer – if you have no crucifix, a **barren cross** will suffice. The color **scarlet or deep red** is appointed for this day and thus a red tablecloth or a red hanging might adorn the space. There are many **musical settings** of the Passion according to St. John, the gospel appointed for the church's liturgy. One caution, however: many translations use the term "Jews" to describe a small group of religious leaders who opposed Jesus. The term in the Greek of the Gospel is **loudaioi** and is rightly translated "Judeans," the region of ancient Israel where Jerusalem was located.



In homes where there are **young children**, one might want to find various images of Jesus in the Gospel of John and draw them: lamb (John 1:29); spring of water (John 4:14); bread (John 6:35); light (John 8:12); door (John 10:1-2); shepherd (John 10:10-11); vine (John 15:1-3). Let these images adorn your space. By all means, light a **candle** if you can. While there is "night" all around us, the light continues to shine brightly in Jesus, the center of our worship and our prayer. Indeed, do we all not need more light in this world? Consider this reminder:

Christian worship in the church or in the home on Sundays and feast days is always voiced in the plural – *we*, *us*, and *ours* – even when one is worshipping by oneself.

Hymn

Pray this hymn

Image of the unseen God,
Firstborn of creation,
Matrix of the spinning world,
Heavenly foundation:
Christ, now reigning from the cross,
Wondrous incarnation.
Dawn of light before all time,

Union of all being,
Of the mystic church, the head,
Source and the beginning:
Christ, now reigning from the cross,
Precious is your coming.

Firstborn of the blessed dead,
Dwelling of the Maker,
Concord of all things with God,
Wounded intercessor:
Christ, now reigning from the cross,
Glorious is your splendor.

Collect

After a period of silence, say this prayer

Almighty God,
we pray you graciously to behold this your household,
for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed,
and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross;
who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. *Amen.*

The Word of God for Good Friday

The primary reading is the gospel with a reading from the Hebrew Scriptures, a psalms response, and a letter from the early church. The readings are found here:
https://www.lectionarypage.net/YearABC_RCL/HolyWk/GoodFri_RCL.html

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

Psalm 22

Listen as the Choir of Westminster Abbey London sings the psalm
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0TdlbrN14E>

Hebrews 10:16-25

John 18:1 – 19:42

Read the gospel aloud without rushing

Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. Pilate said to the Judeans, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

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 Judeans." Many 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 said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Judeans,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Judeans.'" 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 fulfill 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 fulfill 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.

A great silence is now kept.

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Judeans 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 Judeans, 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 Judeans.

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 Day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

A meditation for Good Friday by Walter Brueggemann

The last word Jesus speaks on the cross in John's Gospel is, "It is finished." This is not a statement of defeat or resignation. It is rather God's victory. Already on that Friday before Easter Sunday, Jesus declared his victory. His work is done. He has done that for which his life was destined.

The phrase, "It is finished," is a deliberate allusion to God's "finish" three times in the Old Testament. In Genesis 2, after six days of creation when the earth was made fruitful and blessed, "God finished." God overcame chaos and so God rested as the new ruler of creation. In Exodus 40, after Moses has been designing and building the tabernacle for divine presence, Moses could say, "It is finished." He had provided a resting place for God, the new monarch. In Joshua 19, when the land of promise had been carefully distributed among the twelve tribes, Joshua could report that the land settlement was finished. All of these "finishes" report on God's great work.

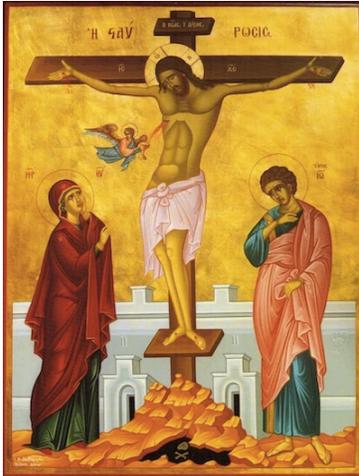
And now a finish of one more victory on Friday: One more gift to the world. What is now finished is the victory of God's way in the world enacted by Jesus. Jesus has practiced the way of suffering love, of compassion, mercy, forgiveness, and generosity. On that Friday, the power of death had done its best yet it could not overcome the power of God in Jesus.

The Friday victory is the defeat of the power of death. The power of death shows up in all the ways that seek to talk us out of our God-given life of well being. That power shows up in hostility and violence, in pettiness and selfishness, in greed and debilitating anxiety. But it is now robbed of this power because Jesus has prevailed.

The Friday victory is the defeat of the Roman Empire and all empires (including ours) that depend on muscle and militarism. Rome had executed Jesus as an enemy of the state; but it has no power to destroy his love for the world.

The Friday victory is the defeat of all those who thought and think they can compromise and manipulate their way to well being. The power of death will continue to compete for a while. But, it has lost. It is finished.

For us this means the sting of death is gone. We need not fear being diminished. It means the power of guilt has evaporated: we need not carry the wound of shame. It means that we need no longer operate out of fear or loss or defeat. It means that in God's strange new world coming to us, our fundamental dignity is not in jeopardy: we do not need to crawl to the top of anything. It means that we are free to get our minds off ourselves and notice that Jesus calls us to care for the neighbor.



Canticle

This canticle is appointed for the Good Friday liturgy in the Eastern Orthodox liturgical tradition. Listen to the Byzantine Choir of Athens sing the canticle with their distinctive form of chant:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2QNbTDjvJ0>

Today He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the Cross.
He who is King of the angels is arrayed in a crown of thorns.
He who wraps the Heavens in clouds is wrapped in the purple of mockery.
He who in Jordan set Adam free receives blows upon His face.
The Bridegroom of the Church is transfixed with nails.
The Son of the Virgin is pierced with a spear.
We venerate Your Passion, O Christ.
We venerate Your Passion, O Christ.
We venerate Your Passion, O Christ.
Now – show us Your glorious Resurrection.

Prayers for the church, the world, and all who are in need

These intercessions may be used, adding others in each household

Let us pray for the holy Catholic Church of Christ throughout the world:

For its unity in witness and service,
For all bishops and other ministers
and the people whom they serve,
For Gregory, our Bishop, and all the people of this diocese,
For all Christians in this community,
For those to be baptized, especially James, and for Kevin who will renew his
baptismal vows,

That God will confirm the Church in faith, increase it in love, and preserve it in
peace.

Let us pray for all nations and peoples of the earth, and for those in authority
among them:

For the President of the United States, for the Congress and the Supreme Court,
For the Members and Representatives of the United Nations,
For all who serve the common good,
That by God's help they may seek justice and truth, and live in peace and concord.

Let us pray for all who suffer and are afflicted in body or in mind:
For the hungry and the homeless, the destitute, and the oppressed,
For the sick, the infected, the wounded, and the dying,
For those in loneliness, fear, and anguish,
For those who face temptation, doubt, and despair,
For the sorrowful and bereaved,
For prisoners and captives, and those in mortal danger,
That in mercy God will comfort and relieve them, and grant them the knowledge of
God's love, and stir up in us the will and patience to minister to their needs.

Let us pray for all who do not know the Gospel of Christ:
For those who have never heard the word of salvation,
For those who have lost their faith,
For those hardened by sin or indifference,
For the contemptuous and the scornful,
For those who are enemies of the cross of Christ and persecutors of his disciples,
For those who in the name of Christ have persecuted others,
That God will open their hearts to the truth, and lead them to faith and obedience.

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.

A Prayer for the Jewish People as they celebrate Passover



God of Abraham and of Moses, of Sarah and Miriam,
We pray for the Jewish people, the first to hear your word.
As you have made them your own,
so inspire them to continue to grow in love of your Name
and in faithfulness to your covenant.
You are our God, living and reigning,
forever and ever.
Amen.

Hymn

Sing this hymn with the Choir of King's College Cambridge or, if you prefer, listen to the choir and assembly sing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMart4wXsI0>



My song is love unknown,
My Savior's love to me;
Love to the loveless shown,
That they might lovely be.
O who am I, that for my sake
My Lord should take frail flesh and die?

He came from His blest throne
Salvation to bestow;
But men made strange, and none
The longed for Christ would know:
But O! my Friend, my Friend indeed,
Who at my need His life did spend.

Sometimes they strew His way,
And His sweet praises sing;
Resounding all the day
Hosannas to their King:
Then Crucify! is all their breath,
And for His death they thirst and cry.

They rise and needs will have
My dear Lord made away;
A murderer they saved,
The Prince of life they slay,
Yet cheerful He to suffering goes,
That He His foes from thence might free.

Here might I stay and sing,
No story so divine;
Never was love, dear King!
Never was grief like Thine.
This is my Friend, in whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend.

Giving thanks at table

You are welcome to use this thanksgiving when you have a meal this day or on Holy Saturday.

O LORD, hear my prayer, and let my cry come to you.
Hide not your face from me in the day of distress.
For I eat ashes like bread and mingle my drink with tears.

We give you thanks for this food and drink:
signs of your steadfast love for all creatures.
Give us a hunger to share your gifts with all who suffer,
for we are thirsty, O God,
thirsty for the flowering of your justice in our land.
Amen.

Notes

Reflection: "Discerning suffering in our midst," Fr. Samuel Torvend

Image 1: Jyoti Sahi, "The Tree," 1984

Image 2: Lamb of God, stained glass, artist and location unknown

Hymn 1: Susan Palo Cherwien, "Image of the Unseen God," in *Come, Beloved of the Maker: Hymns of Susan Palo Cherwien*, Vol. 2, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2010

Collect: *The Book of Common Prayer* 1979

Psalms and biblical readings: *New Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible*, Washington, DC: The National Council of Churches, 1989

Image 3: "Icon of the Crucifixion of our Savior Jesus Christ," Paracletos Greek Orthodox Monastery, Anderson, South Carolina

Canticle: "Today he who hung," recorded by the Byzantine Choir of Athens, 2006

Meditation on Good Friday: Walter Brueggemann, *Into Your Hand: Confronting Good Friday*, Eugene: Cascade Books, 2014

Prayers and Lord's Prayer: *The Book of Common Prayer* 1979

Concluding prayer: *Revised Common Lectionary Prayers*, Nashville: Consultation on Common Texts, 2002; administered by Augsburg Fortress Publishers

Image 4: Marc Chagall, "White Crucifixion," 1938

Prayer for the Jewish People: Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers*, Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1988

Hymn 2: Samuel Crossman, "My Song is Love Unknown," recorded by the Choir of King's College Cambridge, 2010

Image 5: "Icon of the Lamentation of the Theotokos," detail, contemporary sacred art of Greece, Angelicon Byzantine Art

Thanksgiving at Table: Psalm 102:1-2, 9 with thanksgiving by Fr. Samuel Torvend