



Following The Way
A reflection guide for Holy Week 2020

harcourt

Holy Week 2020, April 6-11

Holy Week ends this Lenten season of self-examination, repentance and resolve to change. You are invited to use this guide daily as a personal resource. We are exploring holding a vigil over ZOOM on Easter Saturday, April 11, 3 PM until approximately 4:30: watch the e-harcourt weekly update for news of this.

The historical focus of Holy Week is rooted in conflict between Roman imperial culture based on status, power and wealth, and Jesus's vision of an alternative life style based on compassion and justice. Jesus was executed because he worked for and practised regularly the things that make for real social transformation and a common life (i.e. the Kingdom of God) that is considerably more equitable, peaceful, and life-giving than the empire of Caesar.

Today the dominant culture has been called romantic consumerism. "Romanticism tells us that in order to make the most of our human potential we must have as many different experiences as we can ... break free from our daily routine, leave behind our familiar setting, and go travelling in distant lands, where we can 'experience' the culture, the smells, the tastes and the norms of other people ... Consumerism tells us ... we must consume as many products and services as possible. If we feel that something is missing or not quite right, then we probably need to buy a product." (Sapiens, Yuval Noah Hariri, 2011, page 115.)

Our challenge is to resist romantic consumerism, to 'live simply, that others may simply live,' as the Quakers put it. The climate crisis makes this challenge more urgent than ever. Already, it is the poor who are suffering most the consequences of fire, flood and famine, while species are under threat or going extinct on land and in the oceans at a terrifying rate. Resistance is difficult: we are surrounded by the allures of romantic consumerism, and it influences our values and how we live. The COVID-19 pandemic affords us an opportunity, while sequestered, to reflect on the ways we can change our pattern of daily living.

The theme question for this week is

In this culture of romantic consumerism and at this time of climate crisis and COVID-19 pandemic, how am I called to follow the way of Jesus?

Please use this guide in whatever way is useful to you. We hope you will consider spending between half an hour and an hour on each day's prayer time, sitting quietly and alone.

Yours in Christ,

Spiritual Life Committee, Lent 2020

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In terms of spiritual practice for the week, we invite you to try this:

1. Seat yourself in a quiet place. Take a few deep breaths and with each inhale say to yourself “God is with me” and with each exhale “God loves me.”
2. Pray your own prayer or this: *“May I gain insight into how I am called to follow the way of Jesus in this culture of romantic consumerism and at this time of climate crisis and COVID-19 pandemic.”*
3. Read the suggested passage a few times to become familiar with it, and the comments in this guide.
4. Then enter the story as if you were there, and let the story unfold however it will.
5. Allow yourself to hear the sounds around you, see what is happening. Let your imagination take you where you need to go.
6. Then journal your experience – what you saw and heard, and how you felt.
7. Close with prayer, your own or this: *“I am grateful for God’s constant presence and steadfast love. May I continue to gain insights into how I am called to follow the way of Jesus in this culture of romantic consumerism and at this time of climate crisis and COVID-19 pandemic.”*

Monday - 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.

A few comments:

- Mary's action is counter-cultural. It is an intimate act conducted in public; it flies in the face of the power-culture that would reserve luxury goods for special people and special occasions.
- That money-culture has even influenced the values of Jesus's disciple, Judas.
- Mary is criticized for her action.
- Jesus voices support for Mary.
- Even Lazarus is threatened because of his inactive but central participation.

Enter the story, allow yourself to imagine, journal and close with prayer.

Tuesday - John 12:20-36

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

“Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. The crowd answered him, “We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” Jesus said to them, “The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.”

After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.

A few comments:

- This story finds Jesus seemingly preoccupied with his coming death. He has retreated from the crowds that wish to meet him, and later he hides from the disciples as well.
- Jesus’s words call his disciples to action: follow, serve.
- Jesus also calls the crowd, confused about what is happening, to action: walk while you have the light, believe, become.
- Jesus resists the temptation to ask for personal safety: his task is to be lifted up for all people.

Enter the story, allow yourself to imagine, journal and close with prayer.

Wednesday - 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.”

A few comments:

- This story finds Jesus troubled in spirit, perhaps anxious about what lay before him.
- Jesus instructs Judas, his betrayer, to ‘do quickly what you are going to do.’
- Jesus then gives a shout of triumph; perhaps glorying in the courage that allowed him to be betrayed.

Enter the story, allow yourself to imagine, journal and close with prayer.

Thursday - John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

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. Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

A few comments:

- This story describes Jesus loving the disciples to the end, not stopping.
- Jesus assumes the role of servant, washing feet.
- Anyone who wishes to be Jesus disciple must allow Jesus to act as servant.
- Disciples are to do for each other as Jesus has done for them.
- Jesus gives the new commandment of love.

Enter the story, allow yourself to imagine, journal and close with prayer.

Friday - John 18:1-19:42

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 fulfill 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. First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the slaves of the high priest, a

relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

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 fulfill 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.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.” So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!” When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.” The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.”

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, “Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?” Jesus answered him, “You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.”

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "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 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 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.

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.

A few comments:

- Throughout this long account we see manifestations of the power of the dominant culture
 - soldiers, police, torches and weapons
 - people with authority - Annas, Caiaphas and Pilate
 - the threat of the emperor
 - the legal process
 - the intimidation of Peter
 - the mob frenzy of the crowd
- We also see Jesus's quiet persistence in resisting these manifestations and speaking truth to power
- Like a servant, Jesus washes feet, and anyone who wishes to be his disciple must allow this.
- Disciples are to do for each other as Jesus has done for them.
- Jesus gives the new commandment of love.

Enter the story, allow yourself to imagine, journal and close with prayer.

Saturday - The lectionary and the Bible provide no further gospel account for today. Instead of the pattern followed in these previous five days, we offer a vigil that you can pray alone.

Welcome to this Easter Vigil.

This year is truly exceptional: we are currently living in a virtual “lockdown” due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We continue the ancient practice of the church to hold a vigil morning Jesus’ death. This afternoon, we are in the ritual grief of Good Friday. But we also acknowledge that most of us are also in existential grief or dread or anxiety or some combination, resulting from the pandemic we are currently living through.

Our Vigil comes in two parts: 1) Acknowledging and naming our grief, dread and anxiety. 2) Gently exploring how we might move away from our experience of loss toward some dim sense of a new, more grace-full reality.

Opening Prayer

*Holy One,
here I am,
not merely in a ritual time of waiting,
but in a real time of not knowing what awaits me.*

*When I ritually grieve for Jesus, executed over 2000 years ago,
I know tomorrow I will celebrate.
As I really grieve for the loss of lives, for the suffering,
for the unemployment, and for the loss of a comfortable way of life,
I do not know that tomorrow I can celebrate.
I do not know if in two months I can celebrate.
I do not know.
Just as the disciples did not know what the next day would bring.*

*What I long for
is what the disciples longed for – and got:
a powerful presence in their lives
that turned them away from their fears
and allowed them to face the real dangers
of continuing Jesus’ ministry.*

*May I too, consumed as I am with grief and fear and anxiety,
feel your powerful Presence,
as I move day by day into this unknown life under a pandemic.*

Part I – How could this happen? Acknowledging and naming our grief, dread or anxiety

It's a true "vigil" because we are in waiting. Unlike a ritual vigil where we know deep down how the story ends – in Resurrection – in the case of this pandemic, we do not know, just as the disciples did not know, how the story will unfold. All of us are waiting for this pandemic to pass. All of us are grieving the loss of our former comfortable way of life. Many of us live in daily dread of the future. We know that our path – ritually and existentially – is through the grief, dread and anxiety. This path has much to teach us.

Reading: Psalm 22 Read this Psalm as if it were being spoken by the Earth...

O my Beloved, why have You forsaken me?
Why are You so far, abandoning me as I groan in misery?
O my Beloved, I cry by day but You do not answer;
and by night, but find no rest.

(...)

But I seem as nothing, hardly alive;
scorned and despised by many.
Those who see me make fun at my expense,
they ridicule and gossip among themselves;
“Commit yourself to the Most High;
let Love deliver you,
you who delight in the Most High!”

(...)

I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are weak;
my heart is like wax, melting within my breast.
My strength is broken as a shard of pottery,
and my mouth is dry;
You have laid me in the dust of death.

Yes, wild boars are about me;
a company of evildoers encircle me;
they have pierced my hands and feet -
I can count all my bones -
they stare and gloat over me awaiting my demise;
They divide my belongings among them, avariciously casting lots.

Sit with this text for a few minutes.

Part II - This is not the end: Exploring how we might move forward from our experience of loss.

Easter is about Resurrection, not resuscitation. There are some world leaders who expect things to return to normal – busy factories, full employment, and therefore more wealth-generation and more pollution.

Resurrection would look different. The Judeo-Christian story, right from Exodus, through the prophets, on to Jesus, have told us what this Resurrection might look like. And it's not about a return to the "normalcy of civilization."

Walter Brueggemann, the great American Biblical scholar, reminds us that the Ten Commandments were God's minimum requirements for a society if it were to avoid falling into the "civilization of extraction" of Pharaoh. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount presents the ideal set of behaviours and attitudes for an alternative to that civilization. We don't need any new prophet: we just need to heed what we already know.

Readings: Here are some readings that point us in the right direction.

"And the people stayed home":

And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.

Kitty O'Meara

For a audio-visual version click here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=117&v=oi1INrtc0pQ&feature=emb_logo

"Lockdown"

Yes there is fear.
Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is sickness.

Yes there is even death.
But,
They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
You can hear the birds again.
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
The sky is no longer thick with fumes
But blue and grey and clear.
They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around them.
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
Today a young woman I know
is busy spreading flyers with her number
through the neighbourhood
So that the elders may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.
So we pray and we remember that
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul
Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic

The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.

March 13th 2020

Brother Richard Hendrick, a Capuchin Franciscan living in Ireland,

<https://www.irishcentral.com/news/coronavirus-lockdown-poem>

Prayer:

*Loving Presence,
I draw this Easter Vigil to a close.
I have grieved my losses – the ritual one of Jesus on the cross,
and the real ones resulting from this pandemic.
Like the disciples without their Master, I have expressed my fears and my anxieties.
And like the disciples, I am trying to find comfort and strength
in the words of today’s poets expressing dreams and hopes.*

*May I end this Vigil realizing that I am not helpless.
I am not hopeless.
I am not trapped.
I am not alone.*

*I end this Vigil remembering I live in Your world.
I live in the Divine Milieu.
I live with Your Presence moment by moment.
I live with Your Promise every day:
“all manner of things shall be well.”*

Thanks be to God.

Prayer: “Christ has no body” by Teresa of Avila

Christ has no body now but yours
No hands, no feet on earth but yours
Yours are the eyes with which He sees
Yours are the feet with which He walks

Yours are the hands with which He blesses all the world
Yours are the hands.

Benediction

Life is short, and perils and anxieties surround us,
and we know not how long our journey will be.
Let us treasure each passing day and count our blessings,
and let us be quick to love, and hasten always to kindness.
And may God's grace and love, courage and hope hold us up, wrap us 'round,
and carry us forward as, together, we make our way in this common life.

Amen.

For further reading and reflection about what is a possible sign of resurrection:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/mar/31/virus-neighbours-covid-19>

Sunday - Celebrate Easter by joining the Harcourt Easter service online. Details on how to connect will appear in the e-harcourt letter.

John 21:1-18

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards^b off.

When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and

took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go."

Hallelujah, Christ is risen

We are not alone,
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Easter Monday - What's next?

Perhaps you would like to continue some kind of prayer life. We suggest you try committing to pray for 10 or 20 or 30 minutes every day for a month; stick to your commitment, especially when you don't want to. Sometimes God may seem absent, and your prayer experience dry and unfruitful. That's normal; persevere and you will regain the sense of God's presence.

There are many different methods of praying. 'All methods of prayer are simply human ways of disposing oneself to be open to the mystery of God's unique communication,' writes John Veltri, sj. God longs to communicate with you and will use any means available - your reason, your imagination, your senses, for example.

Among many other resources on prayer, these three may be particularly helpful:

- The Harcourt Library <http://www.harcourtuc.ca/space-resources/library/>
- Spiritual Practices, an adjunct to the Harcourt web site <http://spiritualpractice.ca>
- Conversation with one of Harcourt's Covenanted Spiritual Companions (Stan Bunston, Andre Auger, Kathy Magee, Lisa Beattie or Peter Jackson) or another member of the Spiritual Life Committee (Bill Lord or Megan Ward) or Jim Ball or Miriam Flynn.

If you want to pray with scripture, you can download the daily lectionary maintained by the ecumenical Consultation on Common Texts from <https://www.macucc.org/Lectinary>.

One popular method of praying without scripture is the Examen of Consciousness, also known as the Awareness Examen. It is intended to help you be aware of Spirit working in your life, so that you can respond to this presence. Here is a summary of the Examen in John Veltri's book *Orientations* (<http://orientations.jesuits.ca/bob/examen.htm>).

1. Look over the day and see what emerges. Give thanks to God for whatever it is.
2. Ask for enlightenment about what God wants you to see.
3. Again look over the events of the day, and ask where God has been present in your life, in you, in others or in public events. Where and when have you been drawn by God? How have you been responding?
4. Respond to God about any area that you are being nudged to focus on, pray over or act upon. Express whatever needs to be expressed: praise, sorrow, joy, gratitude, desire for change etc.
5. Ask for help and guidance for what you need to do tomorrow.

The Spiritual Life Committee welcomes your feedback on this guide. Let us know if you see opportunities for other resources or events that would nourish you on your spiritual journey.