

**Resources for Holy Week & Easter 2020**

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# Notes and helpful hints on these resources

We live in precarious times and we've never really been in a situation where Holy Week and Easter can't happen in Church.

However, this doesn't mean that we can't still pray and share in the different liturgies and ceremonies of Holy Week and Easter and live out the story of Jesus.

These resources are designed to give you some things to work with and to guide your devotions.

As a general rule, you will need a Bible and the Spiritual Communion sheet.

You may also find it helpful to have a cross of some sort and a candle as a visual focus. You might like the challenge of making a cross out of whatever materials you have to hand.

Some people have been using Facetime, Whatsapp voice & video calling, Skype and even the humble telephone to share in worship with others. Perhaps you might like to consider that.

If there is more than one of you taking part, you may wish to share in leading the services or reading the Bible Readings. If using videocalling you may have to do this anyway or say prayers line by line.

Some of the services might encourage you to move a bit if you're able. It's probably a good plan to have a flick through before you start a service just to check what might be needed.

**Those with internet access:** may like to make use of *Youtube* for some music and hymns. Some suggestions are offered at various points in this booklet. You may not find that the top-billed video is the one of the best quality, however, so it may pay to do a bit of research before you start!

**bible.oremus.org** is a useful resource if you'd like a modern translation of the Bible (if you haven't already got one).

Above all, know and trust that we do not pray alone or in spiritual isolation. We join our prayers with Christians around the world and with the whole company of Heaven as we worship and adore God.

# Palm Sunday



*Image taken from: pavement on the north side of Sagrada Familia, Barcelona.*

*You will need: a Cross, a Bible and the Spiritual Communion sheet.*

*You may also wish to have a candle lit as a sign of Christ's presence with you.*

## Introduction

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, during Lent we have been preparing by works of love and self-sacrifice for the celebration of our Lord's death and resurrection. Today we come together to begin this solemn celebration in union with the Church throughout the world. Christ enters his own city to complete his work as our Saviour, to suffer, to die, and to rise again. Let us go with him in faith and love, so that, united with him in his sufferings, we may share his risen life.

*Hold your Cross whilst saying this prayer.*

God our Saviour,  
whose Son Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem as Messiah  
to suffer and to die;  
let this Cross be for us a sign of his victory  
and grant that we who bear them in his name  
may ever hail him as our King,  
and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life.  
Through the same, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## The Palm Gospel

*Read: Matthew 21.1-11*

### 'Procession'

Let us go forth in our hearts, praising Jesus our Messiah.

### Hymn

***All glory, laud, and honour  
to thee, Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring.***

**Thou art the King of Israel,  
thou David's royal Son,  
who in the Lord's name comest,  
the King and Blessed one: *Refrain:***

**2. The company of angels  
are praising thee on high,  
and mortal men and all things  
created make reply: *Refrain:***

**3. The people of the Hebrews  
with palms before thee went:  
our praise and prayer and anthems  
before thee we present: *Refrain:***

**4. To thee before thy passion  
they sang their hymns of praise:  
to thee now high exalted  
our melody we raise: *Refrain:***

**5. Thy sorrow and thy triumph  
grant us, O Christ, to share,  
that to the holy city  
together we may fare: *Refrain:***

*Words: St Theodulph of Orleans (c.750–821)  
translated by John Mason Neale (1818–1866)*

## **Collect**

Let us pray for a closer union with Christ in his suffering and in his glory.

*Silence is kept.*

True and humble king,  
hailed by the crowd as Messiah:  
grant us the faith to know you and love you,  
that we may be found beside you  
on the way of the cross,  
which is the path of glory.

**Amen.**

## **Reading**

*Read: Philippians 2.5-11*

### **The Passion Reading**

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory. Christ humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and given him the name that is above every name.

**Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

*Read: Matthew 26.14 – 27.66*

*Keep a period of silence afterwards.*

## Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray.

For forgiveness for the many times we have denied Jesus,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For grace to seek out those habits of sin which mean  
spiritual death, and by prayer and self-discipline to overcome them,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For Christian people,  
that through the suffering of disunity  
there may grow a rich union in Christ,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who make laws, interpret them, and administer them,  
that our common life may be ordered in justice and mercy,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who still make Jerusalem a battleground,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who have the courage and honesty to work openly for  
justice and peace,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those in the darkness and agony of isolation,  
that they may find support and encouragement,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who, weighed down with hardship, failure, or sorrow,  
feel that God is far from them,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who are tempted to give up the way of the cross,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

That we, with those who have died in faith,  
may find mercy in the day of Christ,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

*A few moments of silence are kept before the prayers conclude*

Holy God,  
**holy and strong,  
holy and immortal,  
have mercy upon us.**

*Youtube: My Song is Love Unknown may be an appropriate hymn for  
some reflection at this point.*

*Continue on the Spiritual Communion Sheet at The Lord's Prayer*

## **Prayer after Communion**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant,  
and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation:  
give us the mind to follow you  
and to proclaim you as Lord and King,  
to the glory of God the Father.  
**Amen.**

## **Hymn**

*To the tune Blaenwern, 'Love divine, all love's excelling'*

**Lord of all, we seek your blessing  
as we move on in this space.  
Lead us onwards to your Passion  
keep us always in your grace.  
We today who sang, 'Hosanna!',  
named you as our Lord and King;  
through this week, keep us forever  
in the shelter of your wing.**

**Friends with whom you shared your table  
sold your life and ran away.  
Left you in the hands of sinners  
others shouted, 'Crucify!'  
Make us sharers in your story,  
ever onwards to the end.  
Fill our hearts with your compassion  
when our hearts elsewhere might tend.**

**In the days that lie before us  
sin will show its darkest face.  
Lack of justice, anger, hatred,  
all will build at frightening pace.  
As we stand beneath your Cross, Lord,  
keep us ever in your sight.  
Bring us through the Tomb's dark doorway  
to your Resurrection light.**

*Words: Christopher Johnson*

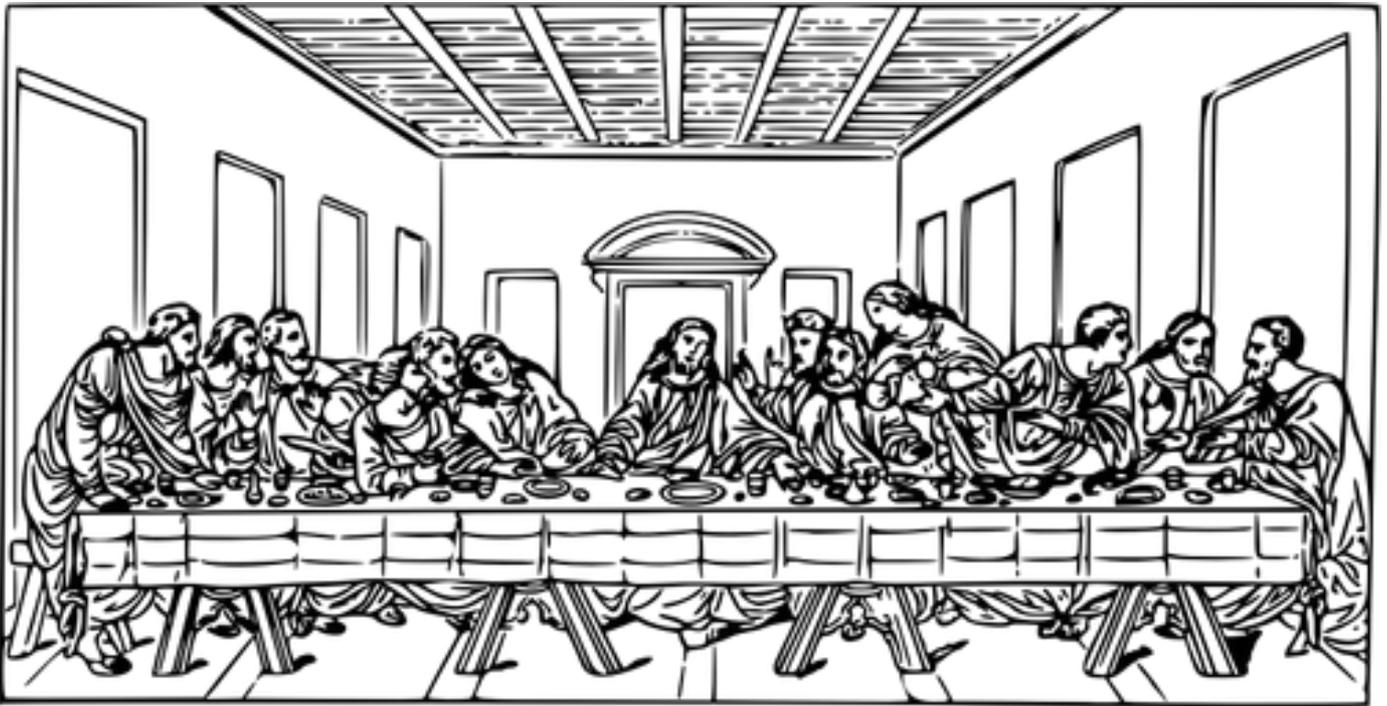
## ***During the week***

*Monday's Gospel: John 12.1-11*

*Tuesday's Gospel: John 12. 20-36*

*Wednesday's Gospel: John 13.21-36*

# Maundy Thursday



*Image from: [publicdomainvectors.org](http://publicdomainvectors.org)*

*You will need: a Bible and the Spiritual Communion sheet.*

*You may also wish to have a candle or other moveable source of light lit as you begin.*

*If it's possible, think about whether there's another room or part of the house that you can pray in for part of this service.*

*It is traditional for this service to take place in the evening.*

*Begin on the Spiritual Communion sheet.*

## **Collect**

Let us pray that we may love one another  
as Christ has loved us.

*Keep a few moments of silence.*

God our Father,  
your Son Jesus Christ was obedient to the end  
and drank the cup prepared for him:  
may we who share his table  
watch with him through the night of suffering  
and be faithful.

**Amen.**

## **First Reading**

*Read: 1 Corinthians 11.23-26.*

## **Gospel Reading**

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.  
I give you a new commandment, says the Lord:  
Love one another as I have loved you.

**Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Read: John 13.1-17 & 31b-35*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Keep a few moments of silence to ponder the readings.*

*Youtube: Ubi Caritas by Duruflé is particularly appropriate.*

## **Prayers**

*A few pointers:*

- For the unity of Christ's Church, especially at a time when we can't gather.
- For those who are isolated and lonely.
- For those who are serving the needs of others above themselves.
- For inspiration as to how we can serve in new and creative ways.

*Continue on the Spiritual Communion sheet at The Lord's Prayer then, after the Act of Spiritual Reception,*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
we thank you that in this wonderful sacrament  
you have given us the memorial of your passion:  
grant us so to reverence the sacred mysteries  
of your body and blood  
that we may know within ourselves  
and show forth in our lives  
the fruit of your redemption,  
for you are alive and reign, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

## **The Vigil**

*Ordinarily at this point, the Blessed Sacrament would be moved to the Altar of Repose and the Church stripped of its adornments ready for Good Friday. Psalm 22 is usually read at this point.*

*If you're able to move to a different place, you may wish to move there now with the candle.*

*Youtube: Tantum Ergo by De Severac is particularly appropriate at this point.*

*You may wish simply to keep a period of silence as we watch and wait with Our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane.*

*The Vigil concludes with*

## **The Gospel of the Watch**

*Read: Luke 22.31-62. Or, more simply,*

When the disciples had sung a hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives. Jesus prayed to the Father, 'If it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me.' He said to his disciples, 'How is it that you were not able to keep watch with me for one hour? The hour has come for the Son of Man to be handed over to the power of sinners.'

Christ was obedient unto death. Go in his peace.

*You may wish to depart to bed at this point but please ensure that the candle is extinguished.*

# Good Friday



*'What is truth?'*  
Image from Passion Façade, Sagrada Família, Barcelona.

*You will need: a Bible, a Cross and the Spiritual Communion sheet. You may also wish to have a candle lit at the beginning.*

*The customary time for this service is in the early afternoon, the traditional hours of Jesus' suffering on the Cross, leading up to his death at 3pm. However, you may wish to stagger the readings throughout the day, especially as they're long.*

*The Proclamation of the Cross may be best left until the lead up to 3pm, however.*

*The service begins with silence, then the Collect.*

## Collect

Almighty Father,  
look with mercy on this your family  
for which our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be betrayed  
and given up into the hands of sinners  
and to suffer death upon the cross;  
who is alive and glorified with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

## Old Testament Reading

*Read: Isaiah 52.13–end of 53*

*Silence is kept.*

## Psalm

*Read: Psalm 22.1-21*

## New Testament Reading

*Read: Hebrews 10.16-25*

## Hymn

**There is a green hill far away,  
without a city wall,  
where the dear Lord was crucified,  
who died to save us all.**

**We may not know, we cannot tell,  
what pains he had to bear,  
but we believe it was for us  
he hung and suffered there.**

**He died that we might be forgiven,  
he died to make us good,  
that we might go at last to heaven,  
saved by his precious blood.**

**There was no other good enough  
to pay the price of sin;  
he only could unlock the gate  
of heaven, and let us in.**

**O dearly, dearly has he loved,  
and we must love him too,  
and trust in his redeeming blood,  
and try his works to do.**

*Words: Cecil Frances Alexander (1818–1895)*

## **The Passion Reading**

*Read: John 18 & 19.*

*Extinguish the candle as a symbol of Jesus' death and keep silence after the reading.*

*Youtube: Crucifixus by Lotti*

## **The Proclamation of the Cross**

*Youtube: Sing my tongue the Glorious Battle recorded by A Remillard*

*Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle,  
sing the last, the dread affray;  
o'er the cross, the victor's trophy,  
sound the high triumphal lay,  
how, the pains of death enduring,  
earth's Redeemer won the day.*

*When at length the appointed fullness  
of the sacred time was come,  
he was sent, the world's Creator,  
from the Father's heavenly home,  
and was found in human fashion,  
offspring of the virgin's womb.*

*Now the thirty years are ended  
which on earth he willed to see,  
willingly he meets his passion,  
born to set his people free;  
on the cross the Lamb is lifted,  
there the sacrifice to be.*

*There the nails and spear He suffers,  
vinegar and gall and reed;  
from His sacred body piercèd  
blood and water both proceed:  
precious flood, which all creation  
from the stain of sin hath freed.*

*Faithful Cross, above all other,  
one and only noble Tree,  
none in foliage, none in blossom,  
none in fruit thy peer may be;  
sweet the wood, and sweet the iron,  
and thy load, most sweet is he.*

*Youtube: The Reproaches by John Sanders and recorded by Ely Cathedral*

*You may wish to spend some time in silent prayer with the Cross that you have in front of you. If it's possible, you may wish to hold it.*

## **Acclamations**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,  
**because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

This is the wood of the cross,  
on which hung the Saviour of the world.  
**Come, let us worship.**

O Saviour of the world,  
who by your cross and precious blood have redeemed us,  
**save us and help us, we humbly pray.**

## **Prayers**

Pray for:

- The Church. Bishops Richard & Alistair.
- For those who were due to be baptised this season.
- For Christians who are persecuted and tortured for their faith.
- For those whose faith is shaky or lost.
  
- The Leaders of the Nations.
- The relationship between countries, especially those at war.
- Those tackling the Coronavirus at national level.
- The relationship between people of all faiths and none.
  
- The sick and suffering.
- Those who minister to them and care for them.
- Those at the point of death, especially those who are afraid.
- Those who have died.
  
- Your own prayers and petitions.

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light,  
look favourably on your whole Church,  
that wonderful and sacred mystery,  
and by the tranquil operation of your perpetual providence  
carry out the work of our salvation:  
and let the whole world feel and see  
that things which were cast down are being raised up  
and things which had grown old are being made new  
and that all things are returning to perfection  
through him from whom they took their origin,  
even Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

## Hymn

**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 cross 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.**

*Words: Isaac Watts (1674–1748)*

## Conclusion

*Continue with the Lord's Prayer & Act of Spiritual Reception on the Spiritual Communion Sheet, then*

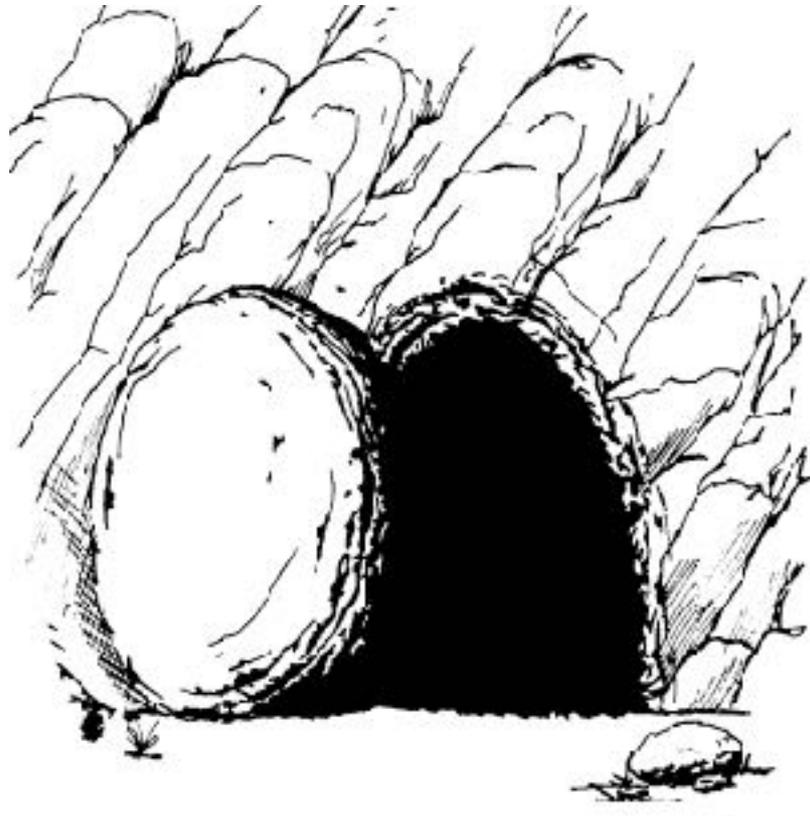
Most merciful God,  
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ  
delivered and saved the world:  
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross  
we may triumph in the power of his victory;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

*Youtube: O Saviour of the World by John Goss*

# **Holy Saturday**

## *Easter Vigil*



*You will need: a Bible, a candle, a Cross and the Spiritual Communion sheet. A bell, rattle or other percussion instrument (improvised or otherwise!)*

*The customary time for this service is after sunset (though early risers may prefer to start at dawn on Easter Day instead).*

*You may wish to be selective in the Vigil Readings but the Exodus 14 reading should be one that you choose.*

*You may wish to work in low light to begin with, e.g. by a lamp rather than the main ceiling light.*

## Gathering

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, on this most holy night, when our Lord Jesus Christ passed from death to life, the Church invites her children throughout the world to come together in vigil and prayer. This is the Passover of the Lord. We remember his death and resurrection by hearing his word and celebrating his mysteries, confident that we shall share his victory over death and live with him for ever in God.

*Light the candle.*

May the light of Christ, rising in glory,  
banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

The Light of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Say together*

## Exsultet

**Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels!  
O Universe, dance around God's throne!  
Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!  
Sound the victorious trumpet of salvation!**

**Rejoice, O earth, in glory,  
revealing the splendour of your creation,  
radiant in the brightness of your triumphant King!  
Christ has conquered! Now his life and glory fill you!  
Darkness vanishes for ever!**

**Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory!  
The risen Saviour, our Lord of life, shines upon you!  
Let all God's people sing and shout for joy.**

*Youtube: Easter Song of Praise by Richard Shephard*

## Vigil

As we await the risen Christ, let us hear the record of God's saving deeds in history, recalling how he saved his people in ages past and in the fullness of time sent his Son to be our Redeemer; and let us pray that through this Easter celebration God may bring to perfection in each of us the saving work he has begun.

**First Reading**  
*The Creation*

*Read: Genesis 1.1-2.4a*

Christ is the image of the unseen God;  
**through him all things were made.**

Almighty God,  
you have created the heavens and the earth  
and made us in your own image:  
teach us to discern your hand in all your works  
and your likeness in all your children;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**Second Reading**  
*Crossing the Red Sea*

*Read: Exodus 14.10- 15.18*

The Lord is my strength and my might.  
**He has become my salvation.**

Lord God our redeemer,  
who heard the cry of your people  
and sent your servant Moses to lead them out of slavery:  
free us from the tyranny of sin and death  
and, by the leading of your Spirit,  
bring us to our promised land;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

**Third Reading**  
*The Valley of the Dry Bones*

*Read: Ezekiel 37.1-14*

Christ is the resurrection and the life.

**Those who believe in Christ will never die.**

Lord God of our salvation,  
you speak the word to your scattered people,  
and bring up our life from the valley of death:  
breathe your Spirit upon your Church,  
that we may live and stand before you  
confident in your risen Son,  
Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Fourth Reading**  
*Jerusalem praises God*  
*Zephaniah 3.14-end*

Where, O death, is your victory?

**Where, O death, is your sting?**

Almighty God,  
who called your Church to bear witness  
that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:  
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,  
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;  
through him who was lifted up on the cross,  
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

## Easter Acclamation

*(Whispered)*

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

*(Louder)*

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

*(Louder still)*

Alleluia. Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

*You can celebrate! Ring bells, use the instrument you've got, make noise, cheer, greet one another etc etc.*

*If you started in low light, turn the lights back on.*

*Youtube: Gloria from Schubert Mass in G*

*Or say together:*

## Gloria in Excelsis

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.**

**God of glory,  
by the raising of your Son  
you have broken the chains of death and hell:  
fill your Church with faith and hope;  
for a new day has dawned  
and the way to life stands open  
in our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

**Gospel Reading**

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the first and the last, says the Lord, and the living one;  
I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.

**Alleluia!**

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Read: Matthew 28.1-10.*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Renewal of Baptismal Vows**

*Ordinarily at this point, we would renew our Baptismal Vows, but we'll save that for when we can meet again.*

*Instead, take a moment to ponder and give thanks for the gift of faith and your relationship with God. Thank God for the call upon your life in baptism and ask him to help you serve as best you can.*

*If you're with someone, you might like to take the opportunity to discuss your faith and when you've known God in your life.*

*Then, on the next page, remind yourself of the faith that we all share.*

## Affirmation of Faith

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.**

*The service continues on the Spiritual Communion sheet at the Lord's Prayer.*

## Prayer after Communion

**God of Life,  
who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son  
to the death of the cross,  
and by his glorious resurrection  
have delivered us from the power of our enemy:  
grant us so to die daily to sin,  
that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his risen life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

*You might like to finish with a hymn (printed overleaf).*

## Hymn

**The day of resurrection!  
Earth, tell it out abroad;  
the Passover of gladness,  
the Passover of God;  
from death to life eternal,  
from earth unto the sky,  
our God hath brought us over  
with hymns of victory.**

**Our hearts be pure from evil,  
that we may see aright  
the Lord in rays eternal  
of resurrection-light;  
and, listening to his accents,  
may hear so calm and plain  
his own 'All hail', and, hearing,  
may raise the victor strain.**

**Now let the heavens be joyful,  
and earth her song begin,  
the round world keep high triumph,  
and all that is therein;  
let all things seen and unseen  
their notes of gladness blend,  
for Christ the Lord is risen,  
our joy that hath no end.**

*Words: St John of Damascus (c.675–c.750)  
translated by John Mason Neale (1818–1866)\**

Alleluia. Christ is Risen!  
**He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

*Youtube: Vierne finale Symphony no.1*

## Easter Day

The service for Easter Day will follow the Spiritual Communion sheet as normal.

The readings will be: *Acts 10.34-43 & John 20.1-18*

You can add **Alleluia!** to just about everything. It's a day of great celebration!

You may also like to include aspects of the Vigil Service if you didn't follow them on Saturday.

There will be broadcast worship at various points over the 'Easter Weekend', so keep an eye out in your TV guides.

If you have access to Youtube, there's a veritable feast of music available to augment your worship, including complete editions of 'Easter from Kings'.

*You might particularly like to like to search for:*

This joyful Eastertide - Easter from Kings 2019

Blessed be the God and Father – Wesley

See, what a morning – Stuart Townend

Te Deum in B flat – Stanford

Widor Toccata

Dubois Toccata

# Some Reflections for Meditation

## **Palm Sunday**

Today the crucial stage of the journey begins. A journey that started before time began. Before Eden, before the Crib. Now, Jesus comes to fulfil a destiny that was his from the moment of his birth. He arrives in humility, seated on a humble donkey, but still the crowds turn out to greet him in great number. These are the same crowds who in just a few days' time will stop shouting 'Hosanna!' and instead pick up the call to 'Crucify him!'. Where will our hearts be in a week's time, in amongst the uncertainty of life at the moment? Can we journey with Christ through the difficulties of the coming week, whatever it may hold for us? Can we keep our hearts and eyes fixed on him in amongst the temptations and distractions of the world? Can we continue to shout Hosanna?

## **Maundy Thursday**

A strange night. An evening of celebration that everyone looks forward to; celebrating shared history and God's providence down the ages. And yet, it turns very quickly. A convivial meal is changed by the dark warning of what is going to happen in the coming hours and the preparations that the disciples need to make for life without Jesus. He gives them the gift of the Eucharist to remember him by each time they meet. (This deserves more pondering than a short meditation offers at a time when we can't gather!). Jesus also tells them to serve one another, to wash one another's feet. Not to be so proud either to refuse to wash someone else's feet or to have one's own feet washed. At a time when many of us need help of one sort or another and we need to serve in different ways, what might this say to us?

The evening gets worse however, with betrayal, agony of mind, body and spirit and the eventual arrest, imprisonment and trial. Jesus' isolation and separation from the people he called his friends reaches a new point. That isolation and sense of abandonment will get worse as the hours wear on.

## **Good Friday**

In some ways, the best way to reflect on Good Friday is to point back to the Gospel account of Jesus' final hours through John 18 & 19. The story unfolds and within it the emotions and characters develop. From Peter's angry denial that he'd ever known Jesus to the patient and heart-rending loyalty of Our Lady and the Beloved Disciple. In amongst all of this, Jesus continues; mocked by the crowds that were initially so supportive, exhausted, beaten, tortured and with an increasing sense of abandonment by everyone, even by God. God has not abandoned Jesus, but there is a task to be done. A curtain of sin, separation and distance between God and humankind to be removed and destroyed. Jesus will fulfil that task. Jesus will rise again from this, but not before he has paid the ultimate price for the people he loves.

## **Holy Saturday**

A day of comparative peace and calm. Jesus lies in the tomb given to him by a follower, other people come to terms with what has happened. The frenzy of the last few hours and days comes to a shuddering halt. Some people wait in fear of being associated with Jesus. Some wait in expectation and hope, remembering in the back of their minds what they've heard Jesus prophesy. Will it happen? Will his promises come true? We know the answer, but that doesn't have to lessen our expectation and hope too.

## **Easter Day**

The promises have been fulfilled. Christ is alive! What do we do with that information? With that knowledge in our hearts? How can we be sent forth like Mary Magdalene and the disciples and share that good news, that hope and that assurance of new life through God's love for us?