

Palm Sunday April 10, 2022

Palm Sunday introduces Holy Week each year. There are few dates in the year on which we know precisely what Jesus was doing on that day. Palm Sunday is one of them (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, and Ascension Day are some of the others).

On this day, Jesus rode into Jerusalem and was recognized as the Messiah, the coming king. Unfortunately, few, if any, really knew the character of His messiahship and kingship. The donkey should have been a clue.

It seems as though the crowds were looking for a political savior, an economic savior, or a social savior. No one was looking for a savior who would suffer and die on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world but his words were forgotten by this time.

Palm Sunday is a celebration recognizing Jesus as Messiah and king. It is important, however, that we recognize Him for who He is rather than who we think He should be. Jesus did not come into the world to give you success in business. Jesus did not come into the world to provide an easy and carefree life for you. Jesus came into the world to be your Savior and grant you eternal life through faith in Him.

Next week as we celebrate His resurrection, we will look back on the events of Holy Week and see God's divine purpose. He came that you may have life—eternal life with God forever. “Let the clear inscription be: Jesus, crucified for me!”



A suggestion for a fun project, make paper palm branches for Palm Sunday. Directions for this palm branch can be found on youtube at <https://youtu.be/YRcf95hKdB4>

All Glory, Laud, and Honor Lutheran Service Book 442, Lutheran Worship 102, The Lutheran Hymnal 160

Refrain

All glo - ry, laud, and hon - or To You, Re-deem - er, King,

To whom the lips of chil - dren Made sweet ho - san - nas ring.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the refrain, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff ends with a double bar line, and the second staff ends with a double bar line.



1 You are the King of Is - rael And Da - vid's roy - al Son,
2 The com - pa - ny of an - gels Is prais - ing You on high,
3 The mul - ti - tude of pil - grims With palms be - fore You went;
4 To You be - fore Your pas - sion They sang their hymns of praise;
5 As You re - ceived their prais - es, Ac - cept the prayers we bring,



Now in the Lord's name com - ing, Our King and Bless - ed One.
And we with all cre - a - tion In cho - rus make re - ply.
Our praise and prayer and an - thems Be - fore You we pre - sent.
To You, now high ex - alt - ed, Our mel - o - dy we raise.
O Source of ev - 'ry bless - ing, Our good and gra - cious King.

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[L] In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

[C] Amen.

[P] Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

[C] Hosanna to the Son of David.

[P] Let us pray: Most merciful God, as the people of Jerusalem, with palms in their hands, gathered to greet Your dearly beloved Son when He came into His Holy City, grant that we may ever hail Him as our King and, when He comes again, may go forth to meet Him with trusting and steadfast hearts and follow Him in the way that leads to eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

[C] Amen.

[P] Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

[C] It is right to give him thanks and praise.

[P] We praise and thank you, O God, for the great acts of love by which you have redeemed us through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. On this day He entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph and was acclaimed Son of David and King of kings by those who scattered their garments and branches of palm in his path.

We ask that you bless children and all those who celebrate with us Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Grant that we may ever hail Jesus as our Lord and King and follow him with perfect confidence; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

[C] Amen.

[P] Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

[C] Hosanna to the Son of David.

L Holy God, holy and most gracious Father,

C have mercy and hear us.

L Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:

C God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen. (*Luke 18:13*)

L Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Introit Psalm 24:7–10; antiphon Psalm 118:26

L Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

We bless you from the house of the Lord.

C Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.

L Who is this King of glory?

The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle!

C Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.

L Who is this King of glory?

The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!

C Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

We bless you from the house of the Lord.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Collect of the Day

L Let us pray: Almighty God, You sent Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to take our flesh upon Him and to suffer death on the cross. Grant that we may share in His obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of His resurrection; through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

Zechariah 9:9-12

⁹Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

behold, your king is coming to you;

righteous and having salvation is he,

humble and mounted on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim

and the war horse from Jerusalem;

and the battle bow shall be cut off,

and he shall speak peace to the nations;

his rule shall be from sea to sea,

and from the River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

¹²Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;
today I declare that I will restore to you double.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

G Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hebrews 9:12a, c, 15a; Psalm 111:9a

L [Christ] entered once for all into the holy places, by means of his own blood,
thus securing an eternal redemption.

C Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant,
so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.

L He sent redemption to his people;

C he has commanded his covenant forever.

Psalm 118:19–29

L ¹⁹Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.

C ²⁰**This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.**

L ²¹I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

C ²²**The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.**

L ²³This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

C ²⁴**This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

L ²⁵Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success!

C ²⁶**Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD.**

L ²⁷The LORD is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us.

Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar!

C **You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you.**

L ²⁹Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;

C **for his steadfast love endures forever!**

Philippians 2:5-11

⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

G Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: Joel 2:13; Philippians 2:8b

L Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;

C He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Matthew 21:1-9

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 21st chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.” ⁴This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,

⁵“Say to the daughter of Zion,
‘Behold, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’”

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. ⁸Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father

Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.



1 Ride on, ride on in maj - es - ty! Hark! All the
 2 Ride on, ride on in maj - es - ty! In low - ly
 3 Ride on, ride on in maj - es - ty! The an - gel
 4 Ride on, ride on in maj - es - ty! Thy last and
 5 Ride on, ride on in maj - es - ty! In low - ly



tribes ho - san - na cry. O Sav - ior meek, pur -
 pomp ride on to die. O Christ, Thy tri - umphs
 ar - mies of the sky Look down with sad and
 fierc - est strife is nigh. The Fa - ther on His
 pomp ride on to die. Bow Thy meek head to



sue Thy road, With palms and scat - tered gar - ments strowed.
 now be - gin O'er cap - tive death and con - quered sin.
 won - d'ring eyes To see the ap - proach - ing sac - ri - fice.
 sap - phire throne A - waits His own a - noint - ed Son.
 mor - tal pain, Then take, O God, Thy pow'r and reign.

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Devotional thoughts:

How's your Hebrew? If I'm right, you know at least three or four Hebrew words.

The first one that everyone knows is Amen. Someone has calculated that Amen is the most well-known word in the world. It is spoken by people in practically every language on earth. It's a Hebrew word that we very seldom translate. It means something is "rock-solidly true." In our English translations, we often hear Jesus say, "Verily, verily" or "Truly, truly, I say to you." "Verily, verily" and "truly, truly" are renditions of "amen, amen."

The second Hebrew word everyone knows is "Hallelujah" (or "Alleluia"). It means "Praise the Lord." It is a combination of the Hebrew word for praise and God's personal name YHWH. (Sometimes this is pronounced Yahweh. Other people pronounce it Jehovah.) In most of our Bibles, it is translated by the word LORD in all uppercase letters. It is translated as LORD because, already by Jesus' time, people were not speaking God's name out loud in respect to the Second Commandment, "You shall not take the name of (YHWH) the LORD your God in vain." Instead, they spoke the Hebrew or Greek equivalent of Lord. For this reason, I personally find it distasteful when advertisers and others flippantly use the word "Hallelujah."

The third Hebrew word that is well known to people in the Lutheran church and other liturgical churches is "Hosanna." It is sung as part of the Sanctus (the "Holy, Holy, Holy") in every communion service at the conclusion of the Preface. So in a way, every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we remember Palm Sunday! The Hebrew word represented by "Hosanna" is found throughout the Old Testament. But on Palm Sunday we

are reminded of one very specific place where it is used. The crowds were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” These words of praise were extracted from Psalm 118:25-26:

- ²⁵ Save us, we pray, O Lord!
O Lord, we pray, give us success!
²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
We bless you from the house of the Lord.

“Save us” in Hebrew is “Hosanna!” Knowingly or not, the Palm Sunday throngs were recognizing Jesus as the Savior! Every time we sing “Hosanna,” we are declaring Jesus to be the Savior!

In just a few days, the disciples would sing Psalm 118 in its entirety. In the celebration of Passover, Psalms 113-114 were sung before the meal and Psalms 115-118 were sung following. Since Jesus was in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, it’s no surprise that Psalm 118 was on the minds of the people. Many of them must have known it by heart (memory) because they had been singing it since childhood. In fact, just a few verses later, Matthew reports about “The children crying out in the temple, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’” (Matthew 21:15). This is why Palm Sunday is a day to especially involve children in worship. When I was active in worship planning, I would always include the children in a Palm Sunday procession around the church. Many congregations continue that practice.

This would be a good time to consider how Psalm 118 relates to Holy Week and Easter. Here are a few selected verses for you to reflect on.

- ¹ Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!
- ⁵ Out of my distress I called on the Lord;
the Lord answered me and set me free.
- ⁸ It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in man.
- ⁹ It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in princes.
- ¹⁴ The Lord is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.
- ¹⁵ Glad songs of salvation
are in the tents of the righteous:
“The right hand of the Lord does valiantly,
¹⁶ the right hand of the Lord exalts,
the right hand of the Lord does valiantly!”
- ¹⁷ I shall not die, but I shall live,
and recount the deeds of the Lord.
- ¹⁹ Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the Lord.
- ²⁰ This is the gate of the Lord;
the righteous shall enter through it.
- ²¹ I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

- ²² The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
- ²³ This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.
- ²⁴ This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.
- ²⁵ Save us [hosanna], we pray, O Lord!
O Lord, we pray, give us success!
- ²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
We bless you from the house of the Lord.
- ²⁹ Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!

Psalm 118 contains a gold mine of salvation themes. Were you surprised by any of these verses?

Jesus still comes into our lives today, just as He came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. But today, He comes into our lives through word and sacrament. Because He is our “Hosanna,” we will not die but live. We will recount the deeds of the Lord. He has answered our prayers and has become our salvation. Because He gave His life for us and opened paradise to all believers, it is better to take refuge in Jesus than to trust in man. His life, death, and resurrection for sinners are marvelous in our eyes. Out of our distress, we called on Jesus. He answered and set us free! We now live in the day of salvation! Hosanna! Let us be glad and rejoice in it!

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7).

God’s richest blessings to you in Christ.

On My Heart Imprint Your Image Lutheran Service Book 422, Lutheran Worship 100, The Lutheran Hymnal 179



On my heart im - print Your im - age, Bless - ed Je - sus, King of grace,
That life's rich-es, cares, and plea-sures Nev - er may Your work e-rase;
Let the clear in - scrip-tion be: Je - sus, cru - ci - fied for me,



Is my life, my hope's foun - da - tion, And my glo - ry and sal - va - tion!

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L Heavenly Father, as we join our “hosannas” with faithful Christians throughout the world, thank You for sending Your only-begotten Son to save us now and always. Grant that we would learn humility and service from Him and His service to us on the cross, through the same Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

C Amen.

L Heavenly Father, as we enter Holy Week, grant us true and sincere hearts as we walk with Jesus to Calvary’s holy mountain.

C Amen.

L Heavenly Father, grant that corrupt words and sinful actions would never turn our “hosannas” into shouts of “crucify Him.” When we stumble and fall into evil ways, grant us repentance and forgiveness,

C Amen.

L Lord God, heavenly Father, we here remember the sufferings and death of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Praising His victorious resurrection from the dead, we draw strength from His ascension before You, where He ever stands for us as our own High Priest. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers, deliver and preserve us, for to You alone we give all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, govern the kingdoms of this world according to Your holy and gracious will. Protect those in harm’s way because of the war in Ukraine that continues to cause innocent men, women, and children to suffer. Curb what is evil and promote what is good among us wherever we live in this fallen world.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. We thank You for the protection granted to all who have attended to our needs during this pandemic. Thank You that are experiencing a continuing decline in the number of new infections and an ease of restrictions. Continue to strengthen all those who serve us in the medical field. Give Your comfort and peace to all who are suffering from this illness or others. Be with those who mourn. Grant to them the hope and assurance of a blessed reunion in heaven.

C Amen.

C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

C Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C Amen.

Hosanna, Loud Hosanna Lutheran Service Book 443, Lutheran Worship 106, The Lutheran Hymnal 161



1 Ho - san - na, loud ho - san - na, The lit - tle chil - dren sang;
2 From Ol - i - vet they fol - lowed Mid an ex - ul - tant crowd,
3 "Ho - san - na in the high - est!" That an - cient song we sing;



Through pil - lared court and tem - ple The love - ly an - them rang.
The vic - tor palm branch wav - ing And chant - ing clear and loud.
For Christ is our Re - deem - er, The Lord of heav'n our King.



To Je - sus, who had blessed them, Close fold - ed to His breast,
The Lord of earth and heav - en Rode on in low - ly state
Oh, may we ev - er praise Him With heart and life and voice



The chil - dren sang their prais - es, The sim - plest and the best.
Nor scorned that lit - tle chil - dren Should on His bid - ding wait.
And in His bliss - ful pres - ence E - ter - nal - ly re - joyce!

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Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

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Enhancing Your Worship

Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27
My eyes are awake through the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

Palm Sunday April 11 – April 16, 2022 Maundy Thursday, April 14 Good Friday April 15

Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you meditate on what God has done for you.

Monday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Introit Psalm 24:7–10; antiphon Psalm 118:26

- L** Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
We bless you from the house of the Lord.
C Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
L Who is this King of glory?
The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle!
C Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
L Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!
C Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
We bless you from the house of the Lord.

Kyrie

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Christ, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |

Psalm 24:8 asks the question of the day, “Who is this King of glory?” Everyone with palm branches, everyone who spreads their cloaks on the road, and everyone who shouts “Hosanna” agrees that Jesus is the king!

At Jesus’ birth, wise men from the east were the first to ask, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star [in the East] and have come to worship him” (Matthew 2:2). At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus’ disciple, Nathanael, recognized Him as king. He said to Jesus, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” (John 1:49).

After Jesus fed the 5000 with five loaves and two fish, John reports, “Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself” (John 6:15). Now at the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry, everyone agrees that He is a king.

Ironically, in a certain sense, even Caiaphas and the other leaders recognized that Jesus would soon be king. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, they had a secret meeting to deal with Jesus’ popularity. The conversation went like this, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” Caiaphas responded to their concerns with this unwittingly prophetic speech, “You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish” (John 11:47-50). Now, on Palm Sunday, their fears seem to have been confirmed. They must accelerate their plot to charge Jesus with sedition. And that’s what they did.

After Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane and tried before the council, He was brought before Pilate with these fabricated charges. “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king” (Luke 23:2). Since Jesus was standing before him accused of leading a rebellion, Pilate asked, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world” (John 18:33-36).

Pilate’s reaction was to have the King of the Jews flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe and said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” (John 19:1-2).

Hoping to pacify the crowd, Pilate brought the beaten and bloody Jesus out for all to see. Perhaps he thought that they would feel sorry for Him. As Jesus stood there with a purple robe and a crown of thorns, Pilate declared, “Behold your King!” But this mob of Caiaphas supporters shouted, “Away with him, away with him, crucify him!” Pilate said, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” So Pilate delivered Him over to them to be crucified (John 19:14-15).

Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews” (John 19:19). But this only encouraged the soldiers to mock Him. They said, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” (Luke 23:37).

But there was one individual who believed in King Jesus. He was a thief crucified right next to Jesus. He said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” (Luke 23:42). Jesus would come into His kingdom that very day. His kingdom is not of this world. His kingdom is in paradise in heaven. So He said to the thief, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43).

“Who is this King of glory?” The centurion, who stood there and saw the way Jesus breathed His last, knew the answer to that question. He said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!” (Mark 15:39).

So there you have it! The King of Glory is the very Son of God who died on the cross so that you could join Him and a thief in paradise for all eternity.



1 Lift up your heads, ye might - y gates! Be - hold, the
 2 A righ - teous Help - er comes to thee; His char - iot
 3 How blest the land, the cit - y blest, Where Christ the
 4 Fling wide the por - tals of your heart; Make it a



King of glo - ry waits. The King of kings is draw - ing
 is hu - mil - i - ty, His king - ly crown is ho - li -
 rul - er is con - fessed! O peace - ful hearts and hap - py
 tem - ple set a - part From earth - ly use for heav'n's em -



near; The Sav - ior of the world is here. Life and sal -
 ness, His scep - ter, pit - y in dis - tress. The end of
 homes To whom this King in tri - umph comes! The cloud - less
 ploy, A - dorned with prayer and love and joy. So shall your



va - tion He doth bring; There - fore re - joice and glad - ly sing.
 all our woe He brings; There - fore the earth is glad and sings.
 sun of joy is He Who comes to set His peo - ple free.
 Sov - 'reign en - ter in And new and no - bler life be - gin.



To God the Fa - ther raise Your joy - ful songs of praise.
 To Christ the Sav - ior raise Your grate - ful hymns of praise.
 To God the Spir - it raise Your hap - py shouts of praise.
 To God a - lone be praise For word and deed and grace!

5 Redeemer, come and open wide
 My heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide!
 O enter with Thy grace divine;
 Thy face of mercy on me shine.
 Thy Holy Spirit guide us on
 Until our glorious goal is won.
 Eternal praise and fame
 We offer to Thy name.

L Let us pray. Lord, thank You for the gift of the savior who humbling came into Jerusalem riding a donkey on the first Palm Sunday. Grand that my heart would be open wide to receive King of Kings and the life and salvation He comes to bring, through Jesus Christ, my Lord.

C Amen

Tuesday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Joel 2:13; Philippians 2:8b

L Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;

C He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L Let us pray: Almighty God, You sent Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to take our flesh upon Him and to suffer death on the cross. Grant that we may share in His obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of His resurrection; through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

C Amen.

We live in a compressed world. We live in a world of jpg, mp3, and mp4. Those letters may or may not be familiar to you. They represent computer file extensions for pictures, music, and video. They denote special formats used for compressing files so they will use less computer storage and bandwidth. Besides using less computer storage, they all have another thing in common. To achieve their objective, they all lose details. They try to do this in ways that aren't noticeable. But if you zoom in on compressed pictures, you will see what I mean. Compressed audio and video also lose details in the process.

Most of the time, it doesn't matter that details are lost. We're happy with the benefits of file compression. But sometimes details matter.

I still remember getting my first pair of glasses. I was totally surprised by how sharp and crisp everything was when I first put them on and saw all the details that I was missing.

While preparing for today, I discovered that our collect is the compressed version of the historic collect for this week. Our collect is 49 words long. The historic collect is 79 words long—60% longer!

When I read through the account of Jesus' Passion in the four Gospels, I try to be alert to every detail. I always wish there was more. What were the other disciples doing while Peter and John were at the home of the high priest during Jesus' trial? Where was Mary? Exactly how far was it from Golgotha to Jesus' tomb. Did Pilate or the centurion ever become Christians?

Even without all these details, God has granted us the privilege of knowing the most important thing about Christ's Passion. He died for us! He died for us so that we will also rise from the dead and live with Him forever in the world to come.

Here's the uncompressed version of our collect.

Let us pray: Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross: grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; 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 forever. Amen.

Wednesday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Joel 2:13; Philippians 2:8b

L Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;

C He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Psalm 118:19–29

L ¹⁹Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.

C ²⁰**This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.**

L ²¹I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

C ²²**The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.**

L ²³This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

C ²⁴**This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

L ²⁵Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success!

C ²⁶**Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD.**

L ²⁷The LORD is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us.

Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar!

C **You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you.**

L ²⁹Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;

C **for his steadfast love endures forever!**

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Philippians 2:5-11

⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Our reading from Philippians takes up the twin themes for Palm Sunday: humility and exaltation.

Theologians have long distinguished two states of the incarnation of Jesus, the eternal Son of God. They are His States of Humiliation and Exaltation. This distinction and language come from these verses of Philippians.

Jesus' State of Humiliation sounds strange to modern ears because our language has changed. Humiliation in this sense does not mean embarrassment or loss of face. It has its original meaning that Jesus, God's Son from all eternity, chose to humble Himself to be born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus' State of Humiliation was the process of coming down from His throne of glory into our world. Here, He lived just as we do without any aid from His divine nature. He was hungry and thirsty. He slept and He wept. On Palm Sunday, the King of Glory humbly rode into Jerusalem on a donkey! His State of Humiliation reached its lowest point with His suffering and death on the cross for the sins of the world. That was the end of His State of Humiliation but it was not the end of Jesus.

Jesus' triumph over the grave on Easter was the beginning of His State of Exaltation. He began His upward journey from the depths of hell to the heights of His throne in heaven. Just as Jesus' State of Humiliation was a journey down from heaven, His State of Exaltation is His journey back to the right hand of the Father Almighty. It will find its culmination when He returns to judge the living and the dead. Then "every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Our reading from Philippians begins with these words, "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus." What is "this mind" that we are supposed to have? It was mentioned in verse 4, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." Like Jesus, Paul directs us to humbly serve the interests of others. This is the path that Jesus took. It led Him to the cross. Can we do less?

Not too many years ago, this humble attitude of service permeated our culture. I believe that it came from the fact that we were an overwhelmingly Christian society. Many of us know war heroes who humbly served and refused to boast about their deeds. My father was one. He was wounded in the Korean War but chose not to seek a Purple Heart because his fellow soldiers suffered much more terrible injuries. That attitude was not uncommon in America.

But in a generation that has all changed. We live in a culture that is increasingly hostile to Christian ideals. One of the less-noticed ideals to die is the concept of humility and service to others. Our culture seems to prize the boastful and the proud and reject the modest and humble. The Apostle Paul lived in the same kind of culture. But Christian people are different. We have been changed by Jesus' humble service to us. Like Him, we take up the task of serving others until He calls us to be with Him for all eternity.

Prayer: O Lord, Jesus, thank You for Your humble service to us that led You to the cross. Grant us to also have a mind of service to others. Let none of us think more highly of ourselves than we ought. Amen.

Maundy Thursday

Jesus, I Will Ponder Now - 4

Grant that I Your passion view
With repentant grieving.
Let me not bring shame to You
By unholy living.
How could I refuse to shun
Ev'ry sinful pleasure
Since for me God's only Son
Suffered without measure?

The name Maundy is derived through Middle English and Old French from the Latin word for “commandment” It was on this night Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35).

Maundy Thursday is the night Jesus was betrayed. We are reminded of this each time the Words of Institution of the Lord’s Supper are spoken. While celebrating the Passover with his beloved disciples, Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Altar. In it, He gives His very body and blood in, with, and under the bread and the wine for us Christians to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of sins.

Luther's Small Catechism

The Sacrament of the Altar

AS THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY SHOULD TEACH IT IN A SIMPLE WAY TO HIS HOUSEHOLD

- L** What is the Sacrament of the Altar?
- C** It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.
- L** Where is this written?
- C** The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul write:
Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”
In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”
- L** What is the benefit of this eating and drinking?
- C** These words, “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins,” show us that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.
- L** How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?
- C** Certainly not just eating and drinking do these things, but the words written here: “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” These words, along with the bodily eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament. Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say: “forgiveness of sins.”
- L** Who receives this sacrament worthily?
- C** Fasting and bodily preparation are certainly fine outward training. But that person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: “Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.”
But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, for the words “for you” require all hearts to believe.

Hymn: Not All the Blood of Beasts Lutheran Service Book 431; Lutheran Worship 99; The Lutheran Hymnal 156



1 Not all the blood of beasts On Jew - ish al - tars slain
 2 But Christ, the heav'n - ly Lamb, Takes all our sins a - way;
 3 My faith would lay its hand On that dear head of Thine,
 4 My soul looks back to see The bur - den Thou didst bear
 5 Be - liev - ing, we re - joice To see the curse re - move;



Could give the guilt - y con-science peace Or wash a - way the stain.
A sac - ri - fice of no - bler name And rich - er blood than they.
While as a pen - i - tent I stand, And there con - fess my sin.
When hang-ing on the curs - ed tree; I know my guilt was there.
We bless the Lamb with cheer - ful voice And sing His bleed-ing love.

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L In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

L Holy God, holy and most gracious Father,

C have mercy and hear us.

Introit *Ps. 116:1–4; antiphon: Ps. 116:5*

Gracious is the Lord, and righteous;
our God is merciful.

**I love the Lord, because he has heard
my voice and my pleas for mercy.**

Because he inclined his ear to me,
therefore I will call on him as long as I live.

The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;

I suffered distress and anguish.

Then I called on the name of the Lord:

"O Lord, I pray, deliver my soul!"

**Gracious is the Lord, and righteous;
our God is merciful.**

Kyrie

C Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Collect

L O God, You desire not the death of sinners, but rather that we turn from our wickedness and live.
Graciously behold Your people who plead to You and spare us. Be moved in mercy to turn away this
pestilence from us; for the sake of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and
the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST DRAWN FROM THE FOUR GOSPELS

The Lord's Supper: Part I

† Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, also called the Passover, drew near, and Jesus said to his disciples:
"You know that after two days is the Feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man will be given over to be
crucified."

† Then the chief priests and scribes assembled with the elders of the people in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted how they might take Jesus craftily and put him to death. But they said, “Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people,” for they feared the people.

† Then Satan entered into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, one of the Twelve. He went his way to the chief priests and captains and spoke together with them how he might betray Jesus to them. They were glad to hear him. He said to them, “What will you give me to betray him to you?”

They promised to give him money and agreed with him for thirty pieces of silver. He accepted, and from that time he sought opportunity to betray him in the absence of the multitude.

† Then came the first day of Unleavened Bread when they sacrificed the Passover lamb. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover, that we may eat it.”

They said to him, “Where do you want us to prepare it?”

† He said to them, “Go into the city and, when you have entered the city, watch for a man bearing a pitcher of water. When he meets you, follow him into the house where he enters. You shall say to the man who lives there, ‘The Master says to you, “My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house. Where is room for me to eat the Passover with my disciples?’” And he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us.”

The disciples did as Jesus had directed them. They came into the city and found it as he had told them; and they made ready the Passover.

Psalms 116:12–19 (antiphon: v. 17)

¹²What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me?

¹³**I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD,**

¹⁴I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.

¹⁵**Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.**

¹⁶O LORD, I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant. You have loosed my bonds.

¹⁷**I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the LORD.**

¹⁸I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people,

¹⁹**in the courts of the house of the LORD, in your midst, O Jerusalem.**

Praise the LORD!

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST DRAWN FROM THE FOUR GOSPELS

The Lord’s Supper: Part II

† When the hour was come, Jesus sat down and the apostles with him. As they were eating, he said, “I have longed to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for I say to you I shall not eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.”

† In the same way also he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you; this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

“Truly I say to you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father.”

† There was also a strife among them as to which of them should be accounted the greatest. He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ It shall not be so among you. He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that serves. For who is greater, he that sits at the table or he that serves? Is it not he that sits at the table? But I am among you as a servant. You are they who have continued with me in my temptations. I appoint you to a kingdom, as my Father has appointed me. You shall eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

† Jesus knew that his hour was come to depart from the world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who are in the world, he loved them to the end. Already Satan had put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him. Jesus knew that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going to God.

Verse of the Day Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

John 13:1b

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST DRAWN FROM THE FOUR GOSPELS

The Lord's Supper: Part III

† He rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

† When he came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not know now, but after these things you will understand."

Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me."

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

Jesus said to him, "He who has been bathed does not need to wash more than his feet, for he is clean altogether. You are clean, but not all of you." He knew who was to betray him; that was why he said not every one was clean.

† So after he had washed their feet and taken his garments and sat down again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me the Master and the Lord, and it is good that you say this, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. I have done this to show you the way to do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his lord; neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.

"I do not speak of you all; I know whom I have chosen. The Scripture must be fulfilled, 'He that eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me.' Already now I tell you of this, before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe that I am he.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives anyone whom I shall send, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives him who sent me."

**C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven**

**and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.**

**From thence He will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Devotional Thoughts

Maundy Thursday is remembered every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper and hear these words, "On the night when He was betrayed." This is how the Apostle Paul begins His description of the Lord's Supper that we use as our Words of Institution at the consecration of the bread and wine. Maundy Thursday is the night Jesus was betrayed!

Jesus knew His betrayer. He knew that this would be His Last Supper with His beloved disciples. He knew that before sunset on the next day that His body and blood would be given and shed on the cross for the remission of sins.

It is the Apostle Paul who gave us The Lord's Supper as a name for this sacrament. He used this name in 1 Corinthians 11:20 while he was chiding the Corinthians for abusing the sacrament. He wrote, "When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not." (1 Corinthians 11:20-22). He then went on to explain what happened on the night Jesus was betrayed.

Paul also gives us the name Communion for the Lord's Supper. In 1 Corinthians 10:16 in the King James Version, we read, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" [Unfortunately, the word communion is lost in the RSV, ESV, and NIV, where it is replaced with participation.] The word communion means "union with." Holy Communion is the sacrament where the wine is in "union with" the blood of Christ and bread is in "union with" the body of Christ. When we come to the Lord's Supper together and receive Christ's body and blood in, with, and under the bread and the wine, we are also in "union with" one another.

There is a verse from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians that is no longer part of our hymnal. It was included in the Communion service in The Lutheran Hymnal. Maybe you remember it—1 Corinthians 11:26, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

An often forgotten part of the Lord's Supper is the proclamation of Jesus' death on the cross that you participate in every time you come to Holy Communion. When you come to the Lord's Table, you are publicly declaring that you believe what Jesus said is true. In the bread and wine, you are truly receiving Christ's body and blood given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. You are publicly taking your stand with your fellow believers at the altar.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST DRAWN FROM THE FOUR GOSPELS

The Lord's Supper: Part IV

† When Jesus had said these things, his spirit was in turmoil. He bore witness and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you that one of you will betray me."

The disciples looked at one another dumbfounded about whom he spoke. One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was leaning on Jesus' bosom. Simon Peter said to him, "Ask who it is of whom he is speaking."

That disciple who was reclining on Jesus' chest said to him, "Lord, who is it?"

† Jesus then answered, "It is the one to whom I shall give the piece of bread after I have dipped it."

He dipped the piece of bread he had in his hand and gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. After the piece of bread had been dipped, Satan entered into that one. Jesus said to him, "What you are doing, do quickly."

† No one at the table knew what the purpose was of what Jesus had said to him. Because Judas kept the money bag, some thought Jesus had told him to buy what was needed for the feast or to give something to the poor. When that man had received the piece of bread, he went out immediately, and it was night.

† When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and in him God is glorified. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify him in himself, and at once he will glorify him."

† "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you. For this I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

† Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but afterwards you will follow me."

L I cry to You, O Lord;
C in the morning my prayer comes before You.

L Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
C and uphold me with a willing spirit.

L My mouth is filled with Your praise,
C and with Your glory all the day.

L Every day I will bless You
C and praise Your name forever and ever.

L By awesome deeds You answer us with righteousness,
C O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.

L Bless the Lord, O my soul;
C and all that is within me, bless His holy name!

L He redeems your life from the pit
C and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy.

L Hear my prayer, O Lord;
C let my cry come to You.


L Let us pray. Spare Your people, O Lord! Preserve us from this and every illness. Give healing and strength to those who are sick, protect those who care for them, and grant us steady minds and calm hearts in the face of fear. Comfort and protect those we hold dear in our hearts and especially those who are far from us. You have borne our infirmities in this human flesh and purchased us with Your own blood. Keep us in this faith and embolden us in love; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
C Amen.

C Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

L Let us bless the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.
C Amen.

Hymn: Go to Dark Gethsemane, Lutheran Service Book **436**; Lutheran Worship 110; The Lutheran Hymnal 159



1 Go to dark Geth - sem - a - ne, All who feel the
2 Fol - low to the judg - ment hall, View the Lord of
3 Cal - v'ry's mourn - ful moun - tain climb; There, a - dor - ing
4 Ear - ly has - ten to the tomb Where they laid His



tempt - er's pow'r; Your Re - deem - er's con - flict see,
life ar-raigned; Oh, the worm-wood and the gall!
at His feet, Mark that mir - a - cle of time,
breath - less clay; All is sol - i - tude and gloom.



Watch with Him one bit - ter hour; Turn not from His
Oh, the pangs His soul sus-tained! Shun not suf - f'ring,
God's own sac - ri - fice com-plete. "It is fin - ished!"
Who has tak - en Him a - way? Christ is ris'n! He



griefs a - way; Learn from Je - sus Christ to pray.
shame, or loss; Learn from Him to bear the cross.
hear Him cry; Learn from Je - sus Christ to die.
meets our eyes. Sav - ior, teach us so to rise.

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Good Friday

If you wish, you may prepare seven candles to be lit before this service and to be extinguished sequentially during the reading of the seven last words of Jesus from the cross.

Jesus, I Will Ponder Now - 5

If my sins give me alarm
And my conscience grieve me,
Let Your cross my fear disarm;
Peace of conscience give me.
Help me see forgiveness won
By Your holy passion.
If for me He slays His Son,
God must have compassion

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"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John the Baptist spoke this prophetic phrase at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Today we see these words fulfilled, as we meditate on the death of the Son of God on our behalf. In His death, we have life.

Good Friday is the most solemn of days in the Church Year. On Good Friday Jesus was on the cross from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. From Noon until 3 p.m. there was darkness. A Tenebrae (Service of Darkness) service recalls the darkness that accompanied the sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

1 Come to Cal-v'ry's ho-ly moun-tain, Sin-ners, ru-ined
 2 Come in pov-er-ty and mean-ness, Come de-filed, with-
 3 Come in sor-row and con-tri-tion, Wound-ed, im-po-
 4 They that drink shall live for-ev-er; 'Tis a soul-re-

by the fall; Here a pure and heal-ing foun-tain
 out, with-in; From in-fec-tion and un-clean-ness,
 tent, and blind; Here the guilt-y, free re-mis-sion,
 new-ing flood. God is faith-ful; God will nev-er

Flows for you, for me, for all, In a full, per-
 From the lep-ro-sy of sin, Wash your robes and
 Here the trou-bled, peace may find. Health this foun-tain
 Break His cov-e-nant of blood, Signed when our Re-

pet-ual tide, O-pened when our Sav-ior died.
 make them white; Ye shall walk with God in light.
 will re-store; They that drink shall thirst no more.
 deem-er died, Sealed when He was glo-ri-fied.

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L In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

L O Lord, open my lips,

C and my mouth will declare your praise.

L Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

C make haste to help me, O Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ, Lamb of our salvation.

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ From the Gospel of John

John 18

Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

¹When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. ²Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from

the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, “Whom do you seek?” ⁵They answered him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am he.” Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. ⁶When Jesus said to them, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground. ⁷So he asked them again, “Whom do you seek?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁸Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.” ⁹This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: “Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.” ¹⁰Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.) ¹¹So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”

Jesus Before the High Priest

¹²So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. ¹⁴It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.

Introit *Ps. 38:1–4, 18, 22; antiphon: Is. 53:5*

- L** He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.
- C** **O Lord, rebuke me not in your anger,
nor discipline me in your wrath!**
- L** For your arrows have sunk into me,
and your hand has come down on me.
- C** **There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation;
there is no health in my bones because of my sin.**
- L** For my iniquities have gone over my head;
like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.
- C** **I confess my iniquity;
I am sorry for my sin.**
- L** Make haste to help me,
O Lord, my salvation!
- C** **He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.**

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ From the Gospel of John

Peter Denies Jesus

¹⁵Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest, ¹⁶but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷The servant girl at the door said to Peter, “You also are not one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.” ¹⁸Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

¹⁹The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. ²⁰Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said.” ²²When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?” ²³Jesus answered him, “If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?” ²⁴Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Peter Denies Jesus Again

²⁵Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, “You also are not one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.” ²⁶One of the servants 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?” ²⁷Peter again denied it, and at once a rooster crowed.

Kyrie

☩ Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Collect

℟ Let us pray: Almighty God, graciously behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, to be given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death on the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

☩ Amen.

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ From the Gospel of John

Jesus Before Pilate

²⁸Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor’s headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor’s headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover. ²⁹So Pilate went outside to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this man?” ³⁰They answered him, “If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.” ³¹Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.” The Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.” ³²This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

My Kingdom Is Not of This World

³³So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” ³⁴Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” ³⁵Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?” ³⁶Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.” ³⁷Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” ³⁸Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”

After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in him. ³⁹But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” ⁴⁰They cried out again, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

Psalm 22:1-11

¹My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

²**O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.**

³Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

⁴**In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.**

⁵To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

⁶**But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people.**

⁷All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;

⁸**“He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”**

⁹Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts.

¹⁰**On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God.**

¹¹Be not far from me, for trouble is near,

and there is none to help.

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ From the Gospel of John

John 19

Jesus Delivered to Be Crucified

¹Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. ²And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. ³They came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. ⁴Pilate went out again and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him." ⁵So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!" ⁶When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him." ⁷The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God." ⁸When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. ⁹He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" ¹¹Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin."

¹²From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar." ¹³So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. ¹⁴Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" ¹⁵They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." ¹⁶So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.

Psalms 22:14–19

¹⁴I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint;

my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast;

¹⁵my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.

¹⁶**For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—**

¹⁷I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me;

¹⁸**they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.**

¹⁹But you, O LORD, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid!

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ From the Gospel of John

The Crucifixion

So they took Jesus, ¹⁷and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. ¹⁸There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. ¹⁹Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." ²⁰Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. ²¹So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" ²²Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

²³When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, ²⁴so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the Scripture which says,

“They divided my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.”

So the soldiers did these things, ²⁵but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

**C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven**

**and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.**

**From thence He will come to judge the living
and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ From the Gospel of John

The Death of Jesus

²⁸After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” ²⁹A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. ³⁰When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Jesus’ Side Is Pierced

³¹Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. ³²So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. ³⁵He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. ³⁶For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” ³⁷And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.”

C Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ From the Gospel of John

Jesus Is Buried

³⁸After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. ³⁹Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. ⁴⁰So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴²So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Devotional Thoughts

A few years ago, a church was being built on a corner near our house. It's always interesting to watch new construction, especially when it is a church. But as this project progressed, things got curiouser and curiouser.

First, a cross appeared above the door to the church. Then it disappeared. Then it reappeared. This process was repeated several times until the cross was permanently installed above the entrance to the church.

As I discovered later, I was witnessing a disagreement between the minister and the church leaders. When the church leaders had their say, the cross was placed above the door. Then the minister would speak to the construction crew and the cross would come down. It seems that the minister did not want the cross because, he said, "It doesn't represent what we stand for." The story ended with an appeal to the denominational leadership and the cross remained permanently above the door of the church.

It is inconceivable to me that a Christian minister would reject the cross. But such are the times in which we live.

Can you imagine Christianity without Jesus' death upon a cross? What would we have left? Christianity would be reduced to another moral code or a way of living. Unfortunately, that is all some people believe it is. If this were true, then every religion with a moral code could be considered an optional way of life. Just pick the one that appeals to you.

But Christianity is not just one selection in the marketplace of religion. Jesus' cross and resurrection make all the difference.

We have a Savior who gave His life for us. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. No one can be saved by following a moral code, not even the best moral code. We simply can't do it. Our faith is different. Our faith is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. We are redeemed by Christ the crucified.

Good Friday is essential to who we are and what we believe. Without Good Friday and Jesus' cross, we are still in our sins and lost for all eternity. No amount of pious living could change that.

But Jesus' death on the cross was not the end. It was the beginning of life and salvation for us. Jesus' resurrection on Easter was proof that God accepted the eternal sacrifice of Himself for the sins of the world. He overcame the sharpness of death, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

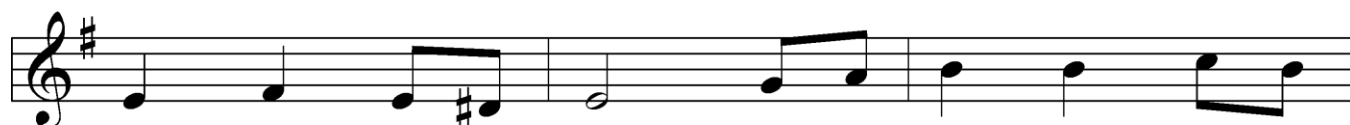
May God grant to you peace and comfort from the words of Jesus. May you rest secure in His loving arms knowing that your salvation was completed by Him on the cross.



1 Strick-en, smit-ten, and af - flict - ed, See Him dy - ing on the
 2 Tell me, ye who hear Him groan-ing, Was there ev - er grief like
 3 Ye who think of sin but light - ly Nor sup - pose the e - vil
 4 Here we have a firm foun - da - tion, Here the ref - uge of the



tree! 'Tis the Christ, by man re - ject - ed; Yes, my
 His? Friends through fear His cause dis - own - ing, Foes in -
 great Here may view its na - ture right - ly, Here its
 lost: Christ, the Rock of our sal - va - tion, Is the



soul, 'tis He, 'tis He! 'Tis the long - ex - pect - ed
 sult - ing His dis - tress; Man - y hands were raised to
 guilt may es - ti - mate. Mark the sac - ri - fice ap -
 name of which we boast; Lamb of God, for sin - ners



Proph - et, Da - vid's Son, yet Da - vid's Lord; Proofs I
 wound Him, None would in - ter - vene to save; But the
 point - ed, See who bears the aw - ful load; 'Tis the
 wound - ed, Sac - ri - fice to can - cel guilt! None shall



see suf - fi - cient of it: 'Tis the true and faith - ful Word.
 deep - est stroke that pierced Him Was the stroke that jus - tice gave.
 Word, the Lord's a - noint - ed, Son of Man and Son of God.
 ev - er be con - found - ed Who on Him their hope have built.

Public domain

+ THE WORDS FROM THE CROSS +

+ THE FIRST WORD +

L Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Prince of Peace. When you were mocked, you did not respond with harsh words.

C When you were tormented, you did not react in anger.

- L** When you were nailed to the cross, you prayed forgiveness for those who caused you to suffer.
- C** **Give to us the virtues of gentleness, patience, and a forgiving spirit, that we may repay evil with good.**
- L** Teach us to love our enemies, and as children of the heavenly Father, to live in peace with all people.
- C** **Amen.**

Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.

(The first candle is extinguished.)

+ THE SECOND WORD +

- L** Lord Jesus Christ, in your infinite mercy you heard the plea of the dying thief on the cross next to you.
- C** **We pray that you would open our hearts in mercy to welcome those who turn to you, and rejoice in their salvation.**
- L** When our last hour comes, hold us firm in our faith, and bring us also to live with you in Paradise.
- C** **Amen.**

I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.

(The second candle is extinguished.)

+ THE THIRD WORD +

- L** Lord Jesus Christ, while you suffered the agony of the cross, your thoughts turned to the welfare of others. Your concern was for your mother in her sorrow.
- C** **We pray that you would regard with pity all parents who mourn the death of their children, and all parents who sorrow because their children have gotten into trouble or forsaken their faith.**
- L** By the power of your healing, we pray that parents and children may know peace, and that relationships may be restored.
- C** **Amen.**

Dear Woman, here is your son. Here is your mother.

(The third candle is extinguished.)

+ THE FOURTH WORD +

- L** Lord God, Father of all people and Creator of all that exists, you hold all people in your power.
- C** **We pray that you would not forsake the world which your Son died to redeem.**
- L** Even though we still see the influence of sin and evil all around us,
- C** **assure us of your continued presence in our midst.**
- L** Help us to know your love in our lives, so we can show your presence to others.
- C** **Amen.**

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

(The fourth candle is extinguished.)

+ THE FIFTH WORD +

- L** Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, you endured not only spiritual anguish but also physical pain on the cross in our place.
- C** **We thirst for the healing that only you can provide.**
- L** When we find ourselves suffering, give us peace and patience to endure the pain that comes our way.

- C** Bring to our minds all that you endured for us.
- L** Give us the strength to bear our burdens by the grace of your holy example.
- C** Amen.

I am thirsty.

(The fifth candle is extinguished.)

+ THE SIXTH WORD +

- L** Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Author and Finisher of our faith. You did not stop short of finishing the task given to you by your Father.
- C** We pray that you would complete in us also, everything that you intend for us.
- L** So that as children of the heavenly Father, we may live for his glory.
- C** Amen.

It is finished.

(The sixth candle is extinguished.)

+ THE SEVENTH WORD +

- L** Lord Jesus Christ, as you gave your life on the cross in our place, you commended your spirit into the loving hands of your heavenly Father.
- C** Give us the grace to trust in you for all things.
- L** When our last hour comes, grant us peace, that we may close our eyes with confidence, knowing that we also will dwell forever in the hands of our heavenly Father.
- C** Amen.

Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

(The seventh candle is extinguished.)

(After the last candle is extinguished, a book may be closed loudly or other loud sound produced to indicate the total completion of Christ's mission. You may then choose to observe a moment of silence.)

Holy Saturday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

Gradual Hebrews 12:2

- L** O come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus,
- C** the founder and perfecter of our faith,
- L** who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame,
- C** and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Verse of the Day: Joel 2:13; Mark 10:45

- L** Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;

C Even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Kyrie

L O Lord,	C Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ,	C Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord,	C Have Mercy on us.

1 Peter 3:17-22

¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

¹⁸For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, ²⁰because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. ²¹Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

Matthew 27:57-66

⁵⁷When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud ⁶⁰and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

⁶²Next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." ⁶⁶So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man! It has become common in the last few years to vilify the rich. Sometimes rich people seem to deserve the criticism that they receive. However, it is important to remember that being rich is not a sin and that rich people can also be faithful! While Peter was in hiding, a rich man named Joseph of Arimathea made sure that Jesus' body received a proper burial.

Today, inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre you can visit the gravesite of Jesus. It was originally a tomb cut in the rock by Joseph to be used for his burial.

On Palm Sunday, a donkey owner gave his never-ridden steed to Jesus for His temporary use because the Lord had need of it (Luke 19:31). On Holy Saturday, we remember that Joseph gave his new unused tomb to Jesus for His temporary use because the Lord had need of it. (It also fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53:9. As a side note, the care of Jesus' body in death should serve as an example for those contemplating their own funerals.)

On this Holy Saturday, as we recall Jesus' repose in the tomb, let us remember that He sanctifies the graves of the saints. As His time in the burial chamber ended in His resurrection, so also we rejoice that our time in the grave will end when we join all believers in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Prayer: O God, creator of heaven and earth, grant that as the crucified body of Your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with Him the coming of the third day, and rise with Him to newness of life, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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