



St Mary's LINTON

Passiontide Promise

Morning Prayer in Passiontide

Rooted in God. Rooted in Community

Passiontide has a very different flavour to Advent, but it is still a time of waiting for we wait for the risen Christ on Easter Day. If we anticipate the resurrection, we miss out on experiencing the events of these last two weeks of Lent afresh each year. This order of service helps us focus on a different traditional step on the way to the Cross each day, and then we rejoice in the resurrection when we conclude our pilgrimage of prayer on Easter Day.

Even if you are following the service at home on your own, dwell in the words. Singing slows us down because we read faster than we sing. Singing quietly on a suitable note at a deliberate speed may help some in their prayer. Observe pauses ♦ for brief reflection and find the rhythm that suits you. If you are speaking, speak slowly and deliberately, out loud if possible.

*O, dearly, dearly has he loved, and we must love him too,
And trust in his redeeming blood, and try his works to do (C F Alexander)*

O Lord, open our lips
and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Let your ways be known upon earth,
your saving power among the nations.

Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation,
to you be praise and glory for ever.
As a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief
your only Son was lifted up
that he might draw the whole world to himself.
May we walk this day in the way of the cross
and always be ready to share its weight,
declaring your love for all the world.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Blessed be God for ever.

A Passiontide hymn, song or the following chant may be sung:

**Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom;
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom;**
(Taizé community)

Monday Psalm 43 and a reading from Mark

- 1 Give judgement for me, O God,
and defend my cause against an ungodly people; ♦
deliver me from the deceitful and the wicked.
- 2 For you are the God of my refuge;
why have you cast me from you, ♦
and why go I so heavily, while the enemy oppresses me?
- 3 O send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me, ♦
and bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling,
- 4 That I may go to the altar of God,
to the God of my joy and gladness; ♦
and on the lyre I will give thanks to you, O God my God.
- 5 Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul, ♦
and why are you so disquieted within me?
- 6 O put your trust in God; ♦
for I will yet give him thanks,
who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

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

Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things

but on human things.' He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.' *Mark 8.31-35*

*Reflections - Based on the traditional Way, or Stations, of the Cross.
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Monday Week One: I Jesus is condemned to death

*The very air that Pilate breathes, the voice
With which he speaks in judgment, all his powers
Of perception and discrimination, choice,
Decision, all his years, his days and hours,
His consciousness of self, his every sense,
Are given by this prisoner, freely given.
The man who stands there making no defence,
Is God. His hands are tied, his heart is open.
And he bears Pilate's heart in his and feels
That crushing weight of wasted life. He lifts
It up in silent love. He lifts and heals.
He gives himself again with all his gifts
Into our hands. As Pilate turns away
A door swings open. This is judgment day.*

Monday Week Two: VII Jesus falls the second time

*Through all our veils and shrouds of daily pain,
Through our bruised bruises and re-opened scars,
He falls and stumbles with us, hurt again
When we are hurt again. With us he bears
The cruel repetitions of our cruelty;
The beatings of already beaten men,
The second rounds of torture, the futility
Of all unheeded pleading, every scream in vain.*

*And by this fall he finds the fallen souls
Who passed a first, but failed a second trial,
The souls who thought their faith would hold them whole
And found it only held them for a while.
Be with us when the road is twice as long
As we can bear. By weakness make us strong.*

Morning Prayer continues with the Responsory on page 16

Tuesday Psalm 142 and a reading from Isaiah

- 1 Give judgement for me, O God,
and defend my cause against an ungodly people; ♦
deliver me from the deceitful and the wicked.
- 2 For you are the God of my refuge;
why have you cast me from you, ♦
and why go I so heavily, while the enemy oppresses me?
- 3 O send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me, ♦
and bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling,
- 4 That I may go to the altar of God,
to the God of my joy and gladness; ♦
and on the lyre I will give thanks to you, O God my God.
- 5 Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul, ♦
and why are you so disquieted within me?
- 6 O put your trust in God; ♦
for I will yet give him thanks,
who is the help of my countenance, and my God.

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

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was

wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53.4-6

Reflection

Tuesday Week One: II Jesus is given his cross

*He gives himself again with all his gifts
And now we give him something in return.
He gave the earth that bears, the air that lifts,
Water to cleanse and cool, fire to burn,
And from these elements he forged the iron,
From strands of life he wove the growing wood,
He made the stones that pave the roads of Zion
He saw it all and saw that it is good.
We took his iron to edge an axe's blade,
We took the axe and laid it to the tree,
We made a cross of all that he has made,
And laid it on the one who made us free.
Now he receives again and lifts on high
The gifts he gave and we have turned awry.*

Tuesday Week Two: VIII Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

*He falls and stumbles with us, hurt again,
But still he holds the road and looks in love
On all of us who look on him. Our pain
As close to him as his. These women move
Compassion in him as he does in them.
He asks us both to weep and not to weep.
Women of Gaza and Jerusalem,
Women of every nation where the deep
Wounds of memory divide the land
And lives of all your children, where the mines*

*Of all our wars are sown: Afghanistan,
Iraq, the Cote d'Ivoire... he reads the signs
And weeps with you, and with you he will stay
Until the day he wipes your tears away.*

Morning Prayer continues with the Responsory on page 16

Wednesday Psalm 143 and a reading from 1 Corinthians

- 1 Hear my prayer, O Lord,
and in your faithfulness give ear to my supplications; ♦
answer me in your righteousness.
- 2 Enter not into judgement with your servant, ♦
for in your sight shall no one living be justified.
- 3 For the enemy has pursued me,
crushing my life to the ground, ♦
making me sit in darkness like those long dead.
- 4 My spirit faints within me; ♦
my heart within me is desolate.
- 5 I remember the time past; I muse upon all your deeds; ♦
I consider the works of your hands.
- 6 I stretch out my hands to you; ♦
my soul gasps for you like a thirsty land.
- 7 O Lord, make haste to answer me; my spirit fails me; ♦
hide not your face from me
lest I be like those who go down to the Pit.
- 8 Let me hear of your loving-kindness in the morning,
for in you I put my trust; ♦
show me the way I should walk in,
for I lift up my soul to you.
- 9 Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies, ♦
for I flee to you for refuge.
- 10 Teach me to do what pleases you, for you are my God; ♦

let your kindly spirit lead me on a level path.

I I Revive me, O Lord, for your name's sake; ♦
for your righteousness' sake, bring me out of trouble.

12 In your faithfulness, slay my enemies,
and destroy all the adversaries of my soul, ♦
for truly I am your servant.

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

The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

1 Corinthians 1.18,22-25

Reflection

Wednesday Week One: III Jesus falls the first time

*He made the stones that pave the roads of Zion
And well he knows the path we make him tread;
He met the devil as a roaring lion
And still refused to turn these stones to bread,
Choosing instead, as Love will always choose,
This darker path into the heart of pain.
And now he falls upon the stones that bruise
The flesh, that break and scrape the tender skin.
He and the earth he made were never closer,
Divinity and dust come face to face.
We flinch back from his via dolorosa,
He sets his face like flint and takes our place,
Staggers beneath the black weight of us all
And falls with us that he might break our fall.*

Wednesday Week Two: IX Jesus falls the third time

*He weeps with you and with you he will stay
When all your staying power has run out
You can't go on, you go on anyway.
He stumbles just beside you when the doubt
That always haunts you, cuts you down at last
And takes away the hope that drove you on.
This is the third fall and it hurts the worst,
This long descent through darkness to depression
From which there seems no rising and no will
To rise, or breathe or bear your own heart beat.
Twice you survived; this third will surely kill,
And you could almost wish for that defeat
Except that in the cold hell where you freeze
You find your God beside you on his knees.*

Morning Prayer continues with the Responsory on page 16

Thursday Psalm 23 and a reading from 1 Peter

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; ♦
therefore can I lack nothing.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures ♦
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He shall refresh my soul ♦
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; ♦
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me
in the presence of those who trouble me; ♦
you have anointed my head with oil

and my cup shall be full.

6 Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life, ♦
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

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

Christ himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

I Peter 2.24,25

Reflection

Thursday Week One: IV Jesus meets his mother

*This darker path into the heart of pain
Was also hers whose love enfolded him
In flesh and wove him in her womb. Again
The sword is piercing. She, who cradled him
And gentled and protected her young son,
Must stand and watch the cruelty that mars
Her maiden making. Waves of pain that stun
And sicken pass across his face and hers
As their eyes meet. Now she enfolds the world
He loves in prayer; the mothers of the disappeared
Who know her pain, all bodies bowed and curled
In desperation on this road of tears,
All the grief-stricken in their last despair,
Are folded in the mantle of her prayer.*

Maundy Thursday (Week Two): X Jesus is stripped of his garments

*You can't go on, you go on anyway.
He goes with you, his cradle to your grave.
Now is the time to loosen, cast away
The useless weight of everything but love.
For he began his letting go before,
Before the worlds for which he dies were made,
Emptied himself, became one of the poor,
To make you rich in him and unafraid.
See as they strip the robe from off his back
They strip away your own defences too,
Now you could lose it all and never lack,
Now you can see what naked Love can do.
Let go these bonds beneath whose weight you bow,
His stripping strips you both for action now.*

Morning Prayer continues with the Responsory on page 16

Friday Part of Psalm 69 and a reading from Romans

- 1 Save me, O God, ♦
for the waters have come up, even to my neck.
- 2 I sink in deep mire where there is no foothold; ♦
I have come into deep waters and the flood sweeps over me.
- 3 I have grown weary with crying; my throat is raw; ♦
my eyes have failed from looking so long for my God.
- 4 Those who hate me without any cause ♦
are more than the hairs of my head;
- 5 Those who would destroy me are mighty; ♦
my enemies accuse me falsely:
must I now give back what I never stole?
- 6 O God, you know my foolishness, ♦
and my faults are not hidden from you.

7 Let not those who hope in you
be put to shame through me, Lord God of hosts; ♦
let not those who seek you be disgraced because of me,
O God of Israel.

8 For your sake have I suffered reproach; ♦
shame has covered my face.

9 I have become a stranger to my kindred, ♦
an alien to my mother's children.

10 Zeal for your house has eaten me up; ♦
the scorn of those who scorn you has fallen upon me.

11 I humbled myself with fasting, ♦
but that was turned to my reproach.

12 I put on sackcloth also ♦
and became a byword among them.

13 Those who sit at the gate murmur against me, ♦
and the drunkards make songs about me.

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

While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.
Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person – though perhaps
for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves
his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Romans 5.6-8

Reflection

Friday Week One:V Simon of Cyrene carries the cross

*In desperation on this road of tears
Bystanders and bypassers turn away.
In other's pain we face our own worst fears
And turn our backs to keep those fears at bay,
Unless we are compelled as this man was*

*By force of arms or force of circumstance
To face and feel and carry someone's cross
In Love's full glare and not his backward glance.
So Simon, no disciple, still fulfilled
The calling: 'take the cross and follow me'.
By accident his life was stalled and stilled,
Becoming all he was compelled to be.
Make me, like him, your pressed man and your priest,
Your alter Christus, burdened and released.*

Good Friday (Week Two): XI Crucifixion: Jesus is nailed to the cross

*See, as they strip the robe from off his back
And spread his arms and nail them to the cross,
The dark nails pierce him and the sky turns black,
And love is firmly fastened onto loss.
But here a pure change happens. On this tree
Loss becomes gain, death opens into birth.
Here wounding heals and fastening makes free,
Earth breathes in heaven, heaven roots in earth.
And here we see the length, the breadth, the height,
Where love and hatred meet and love stays true,
Where sin meets grace and darkness turns to light,
We see what love can bear and be and do.
And here our Saviour calls us to his side,
His love is free, his arms are open wide.*

XII Jesus dies on the cross

*The dark nails pierce him and the sky turns black
We watch him as he labours to draw breath.
He takes our breath away to give it back,
Return it to its birth through his slow death.
We hear him struggle, breathing through the pain,
Who once breathed out his spirit on the deep,
Who formed us when he mixed the dust with rain*

*And drew us into consciousness from sleep.
His Spirit and his life he breathes in all,
Mantles his world in his one atmosphere,
And now he comes to breathe beneath the pall
Of our pollutions, draw our injured air
To cleanse it and renew. His final breath
Breathes and bears us through the gates of death.*

Morning Prayer continues with the Responsory on page 16

Saturday Psalm 130 and a reading from John

- 1 Out of the depths have I cried to you, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice; ♦
let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.
- 2 If you, Lord, were to mark what is done amiss, ♦
O Lord, who could stand?
- 3 But there is forgiveness with you, ♦
so that you shall be feared.
- 4 I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him; ♦
in his word is my hope.
- 5 My soul waits for the Lord,
more than the night watch for the morning, ♦
more than the night watch for the morning.
- 6 O Israel, wait for the Lord, ♦
for with the Lord there is mercy;
- 7 With him is plenteous redemption ♦
and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

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

Jesus answered Andrew and Philip, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.'

John 12.23-26

Reflection

Saturday Week One: VI Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

*Bystanders and bypassers turn away
And wipe his image from their memory.
She keeps her station. She is here to stay
And stem the flow. She is the reliquary
Of his last look on her. The bloody sweat
And salt tears of his love are soaking through
The folds of her devotion and the wet
Folds of her handkerchief, like the dew
Of morning, like a softening rain of grace.
Because she wiped the grime from off his skin,
And glimpsed the godhead in his human face
Whose hidden image we all bear within,
Through all our veils and shrouds of daily pain
The face of God is shining once again.*

Holy Saturday (Week Two):

XIII Jesus' body is taken down from the cross

*His spirit and his life he breathes in all,
Now on this cross his body breathes no more.
Here at the centre everything is still,
Spent, and emptied, opened to the core.
A quiet taking down, a prising loose,
A cross-beam lowered like a weighing scale,
Unmaking of each thing that had its use,
A long withdrawing of each bloodied nail.
This is ground zero, emptiness and space
With nothing left to say or think or do,
But look unflinching on the sacred face
That cannot move or change or look at you.
Yet in that prising loose and letting be
He has unfastened you and set you free.*

XIV Jesus is laid in the tomb

*Here at the centre everything is still,
Before the stir and movement of our grief
Which bears its pain with rhythm, ritual,
Beautiful useless gestures of relief.
So they anoint the skin that cannot feel
And soothe his ruined flesh with tender care,
Kissing the wounds they know they cannot heal,
With incense scenting only empty air.
He blesses every love that weeps and grieves,
And makes our grief the pangs of a new birth.
The love that's poured in silence at old graves
Renewing flowers, tending the bare earth,
Is never lost. In him all love is found
And sown with him, a seed in the rich ground.*

The Responsory - our response to the readings and reflection

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;

by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

We preach Christ crucified,

the power of God and the wisdom of God.

By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

God forbid that I should glory,

save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;

by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

cf I Corinthians 1 and Galatians 6

The Gospel Canticle - Benedictus

**The word of the cross is folly
to those who are perishing,
but to those who are being saved
it is the power of God.**

1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, ♦
who has come to his people and set them free.

2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, ♦
born of the house of his servant David.

3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old ♦
to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us,

4 To show mercy to our ancestors, ♦
and to remember his holy covenant.

5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: ♦
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

6 Free to worship him without fear, ♦
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.

7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, ♦
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
8 To give his people knowledge of salvation ♦
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
9 In the tender compassion of our God ♦
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness
and the shadow of death, ♦
and to guide our feet into the way of peace. Luke 1.68-79

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

**The word of the cross is folly
to those who are perishing,
but to those who are being saved
it is the power of God.**

*The Prayers - the following litany, or free prayer, always ends with the collect
for the day and the Lord's Prayer*

With faith and love and in union with Christ,
let us offer our prayer before the throne of grace.

Have mercy on your people,
for whom your Son laid down his life:
God of love, hear our prayer

Bring healing and wholeness to people and nations,
and have pity on those torn apart by division:
God of love, hear our prayer

Strengthen all who are persecuted for your name's sake,
and deliver them from evil:

God of love, hear our prayer

Look in mercy upon all who suffer,
and hear those who cry out in pain and desolation:

God of love, hear our prayer

Bring comfort to the dying,
and gladden their hearts with the vision of your glory:

God of love, hear our prayer

Give rest to the departed
and bring them, with your saints, to glory everlasting:

God of love, hear our prayer

Let us commend the world, for which Christ died,
to the mercy and protection of God.

Collect - Week One:

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 our Lord.

Amen.

From Palm Sunday - Week Two

Almighty and everlasting God,
who in your tender love towards the human race
sent your Son our Saviour 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 our Lord.

Amen.

Standing at the foot of the cross,
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

The Conclusion

May Christ, who bore our sins on the cross,
set us free to serve him with joy.

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

This Passiontide fortnight we have journeyed together with Jesus and prayed with him. On Maundy Thursday, the station was "Jesus is stripped" which makes us also think of our practice of stripping the altars and knocking over the chalice at the end of our evening service. This year, that will not happen, nor the foot washing. But Malcolm's poetry leads to a climax on Easter Day in which we can all rejoice. "Rise heart - thy Lord is risen;.. Sing his praise without delays, Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise with him mayst rise." (George Herbert)

XV Easter Dawn

*He blesses every love that weeps and grieves
And now he blesses hers who stood and wept
And would not be consoled, or leave her love's
Last touching place, but watched as low light crept
Up from the east. A sound behind her stirs
A scatter of bright birdsong through the air.
She turns, but cannot focus through her tears,
Or recognise the Gardener standing there.
She hardly hears his gentle question 'Why,
Why are you weeping?', or sees the play of light
That brightens as she chokes out her reply,
'They took my love away, my day is night.'
And then she hears her name, she hears Love say
The Word that turns her night, and ours, to Day.*

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