

The Lenten Journey

Notes, Prayers, and Devotions for Lent and Holy Week



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The Lenten Journey

*Welcome dear feast of Lent: who loves not thee,
He loves not Temperance, or Authority,
But is compos'd of passion.
The Scriptures bid us fast; the Church says, now:
Give to thy Mother, what thou wouldst allow.¹*

Lent is the 40-day pre-Easter season in which Christians prepare to celebrate the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many think of Lent as a time of "giving up things we like," but the inner meaning of Lent's holy and joyful ministry, which the Orthodox call the "Bright Sadness," is much deeper. The word "Lent" means literally "long days," and in a profound way it reveals that long day of Eternity whose light looms larger when we deliberately cease feeding on this world and instead feed upon "every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

It is a constant struggle to remember that God is our Father and our provider, that He is the only one who can feed the hungry heart. As Americans, we are convinced of our essential independence. Our political freedom, our wealth, and our technology all conspire to maintain the illusion that we are our own gods, capable of sustaining ourselves. In effect, we are like Adam and Eve, consuming according to our own decisions.

In moments of honest reflection we see our emptiness and hunger but we quickly forget and return to our self-sustaining patterns. Lent offers to us a well-lit passageway from this dying self-assertiveness to a joyful "living from above."

As one Bishop put it in the last century: "When the Patriarch sang 'Christ is risen', a heavy burden fell from our souls. We felt as if we also had been raised from the dead.. Coming out from the [Vigil] service, we began to regard everything in the light of the glory of Christ's Resurrection, and all appeared different from what it had yesterday; everything seemed better, more expressive, more glorious. Only in the light of the Resurrection does life receive meaning."²

It is this Resurrection Light which shines even at the beginning of our Lenten journey. The shadows of our sins grow ever shorter as His Light rises in the eyes of our chastened hearts. But we need the disciplines of Lent to perceive the Light: prayer and fasting and charity, that ancient triad of spiritual training provide the regimen. Using such exercises we convert our entire being into a prayer, very like the Lord's own when He prayed in agony: "Not my will, but Thine be done."

Jesus, having prayed His prayer, *lived* it to the end. Often in life our flesh "darkens the glass" and obscures our vision. But, with an *exercise* of faith, we perceive a new thing springing up,

making a way for our desert journey.³ Our hearts may take comfort from another traveler who once prayed, "Lead, kindly Light, amid th'encircling gloom, lead Thou me on! The night is dark, and I am far from home; lead Thou me on!"⁴ Soon we will celebrate the victory of His Glorious Splendor, but its kindness reaches with warm rays into the very first stages of our Lenten journey. Our Lord, "the Morning Star who knows no setting⁵," stands even now casting light onto our path, beckoning us to join Him.

The Disciplines of Lent

Repentance: The First Fast

The first and most crucial fast is the one from sin. Unless we cease living from sin, and begin to live in grace, we will fail to reap the benefits of the life from above, no matter how remarkably we exercise our will by fasting in other ways. This is what Isaiah means when in the name of the Lord he charges the Israelites to,

"loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke. to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house, etc." (Isaiah 58, from the Ash Wednesday service)

In other words, in Lent we are moving decisively away from the sinful indulgences that break our fellowship with God and man and towards charity, especially where we have sinfully omitted doing good to those near and needful. The repentance from sin, which begins Lent on Ash Wednesday, unburdens us for the fast, even as it restores us to our true Father. Every "no" pronounced to the world, the flesh and the devil liberates us to say "yes" to God and others.

"Man Does Not Live By Bread Alone:" The Fast from Food

While repentance is the beginning and the inner character of our fast, it must be sustained through bodily discipline. To be re-formed, and recover the joy of our salvation, we must co-labor with the Spirit. It is a choice and a work proceeding from the grace He gives. There are two traditional forms of fasting that should be considered, within the context of one's physical and spiritual condition:

The total or "*stational*" fast: This is also known as the fast of preparation and may include either a complete cessation of food or food and water (the latter is *not* recommended for more than a meal). This fast typically takes the form of skipping a meal or two, particularly those meals that precede a Eucharist. Traditionally, the church has suggested brief *stational* fasts for Wednesdays and Fridays to commemorate the days on which our Lord was betrayed to the Pharisees, and His death on the cross. Also, a *stational* fast has been observed by the Church during the *Triduum*, or the Three Holy Days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday until the Vigil is complete. The use of this complete fast is limited and must be undertaken with wisdom. Some will need to consult with their physician, and anyone considering an extended fast of this nature should do it with the advice of a spiritual elder. The purpose of this fast is to sharpen our hunger for the Feast of the Eucharist, to place ourselves in a state of "high alert," so that we will wait with expectation for the fulfillment that is come in Christ Jesus. The hunger pangs are

transposed into prayer for His coming and an attentiveness for His words and ministry through the Holy Spirit.⁶

The *ascetical* fast: This fast is usually a continual but *partial* fast observed throughout the course of Lent. In its most basic aspect it is the cessation of eating particular foods and drink. The purpose of this fast is to loose the bonds of sin and overthrow its tyranny in our flesh. It is the means by which we learn that we do not live by bread alone, and "it is the application to man of Christ's words that the demonic powers which enslave man cannot be overcome but by `prayer and fasting. It is rooted in the example of Christ Himself who fasted forty days and then met Satan face to face and in this encounter reversed the surrender of man to `bread alone'."⁷ Many options exist for how to observe this kind of fast, but the underlying theme of many ascetic fast traditions suggest the selection of those foods and drinks that are associated with feasting. For example, most discontinue the consumption of alcohol entirely, and many will add desserts, and/or meats, as well. Again, the spirit of the discipline is critical. The object of the *ascetical* fast is to break patterns of dependency, to re-establish our genuine dependence on Christ, our "Manna from Heaven", and to enjoy the victory that He has already won. Our lives are often disordered. This fast is an instrument of grace for setting our appetites, our passions, and our lives in order once again.

One of the pitfalls of bodily discipline is that it can easily co-exist with a hatred of the body. The Church has encountered this attitude throughout history and has consistently denounced it as a demonic heresy. Alexander Schmemmann describes beautifully the true conception of the body and the meaning of the fast:

...the body is glorious, the body is holy, so holy that God Himself `became flesh.' Salvation and repentance then are not contempt for the body or neglect of it, but restoration of the body to its real function as the expression and life of spirit, as the temple of the priceless human soul. Christian asceticism is a fight, not *against* but *for* the body.⁸

As our own Ash Wednesday collect puts it,

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts.

Our fast is a "tearing" of ourselves from the reign of sin and disorder so that we—body, soul, and spirit—may enter fully into the dominion of our King of Glory. To confirm God's order in our bodies is to establish the glorious embodied life he intended from the beginning.

Almsgiving: Loving Others Through the Fast

To fast from food but not from our sins against God and one another is to miss the point entirely. St. John Chrysostom insists that the fast "'should be kept not by the mouth alone but also by the eye, the ear, the feet, and the hands and all the members of the body': the eye must abstain from impure sights, the ear from malicious gossip, the hands from acts of injustice. It is useless to fast from food, protests St. Basil, and yet to indulge in cruel criticism and slander: 'You do not eat meat, but you devour your brother.'"⁹

A very practical method for keeping the fast in humility and charity is suggested by the Shepherd of Hermas, a Christian writing on repentance around 148 AD:

. in that day on which you fast you shall taste nothing except bread and water, and you shall reckon the price of the expense for that day which you are going to keep, of the foods which you would have eaten, and you shall give it to a widow or an orphan or to some one destitute, and you shall thus be humble-minded that through your humility he who receives it may fill his soul and pray to the Lord for you. If then you thus fulfil the fast as I commanded you, your 'sacrifice shall be acceptable to God,' and the service which is thus done is good and joyful.¹⁰

At the end of every Lenten Season, usually on the night of the Good Friday service, we collect an offering for the poor or some Christian mission to the poor, the widow, and the orphan. The Shepherd of Hermas gives us a good way of focusing the purpose of our fast, remembering that the sacrifice of our bodies is for the true spiritual worship of God, and the generous love of our brothers and sisters in the Lord. For Christ says to us, "inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these, you have done it unto Me." (cf Matt 25:40) Let us make our sacrifice with a generous spirit, offering up to God a heart that hungers only to praise and thank Him.

Instruction

Lent originally emerged as a time of final preparation of catechumens (i.e. new converts) for their baptismal vows, which were made at the Easter Vigil. One of the tasks given to the Church and these converts was to engage in a period of intensive study. Included in the "curriculum" were lessons from Genesis, Exodus, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Isaiah. The history of salvation in these books was considered both illustrative of the need for salvation and prophetic of the salvation delivered by Christ in His passion and resurrection. These books are still found in the Eucharistic and Daily Office lectionaries for Lent today. And, tracings of Christ in the history and prophecies of God's chosen people are recapped and highlighted in a great crescendo of Old Testament readings in the Easter Vigil.

At the same time, the Sunday Gospel readings illustrate the way Christ's life, teaching, sacrifice and victory perfects the salvation that is prefigured in the Old Testament. On the First Sunday in Lent, Christ leads us into the fast with His baptism, withdrawal, and 40-day fast. On the

Second Sunday we are reminded of the grave consequence of our sins—the suffering He must face because of us. On the Third Sunday He shows us that we are completely dependent on Him for everything, and He speaks of the promise of the living water, or the fruit, that we will receive as we repent and believe.¹¹ On the Fourth Sunday, the depth of our need seems more acute and the healing of sinful blindness, or prodigality, or the impossible satisfaction of 5000 hungry bellies gives us courage. By the time we arrive at the Fifth Sunday, we realize in our bones that we are indeed dust, and that we will return to dust. We have repented of sin, but the final enemy remains: death. Depending on the year, we are given the story of Lazarus, or the grain of wheat that must die for it to grow, or the rejected and murdered son who becomes the cornerstone. We are made ready for the meaning and the joyous victory that Christ, our Paschal Lamb, gives to us in Holy Week.

In total, the readings prescribed for Lent in our three-year liturgical cycle provide an excellent resource for the renewal of our minds. These words of truth are the bread we must digest if we are to be transformed from fleshly to spiritual men and women. Meditation upon this course of truth is a discipline of engagement, which, along with almsgiving, gives our fast its heavenly content. It is the "yes" that fills in the space made by the "no" of our abstinence.

A full observance of Lent includes an intentional program of devotion and study in the Scriptures. Reading the Daily Office or meditating on the Sunday Lectionaries make a rich diet for the mind. Some may wish, however, to supplement with devotional materials such as Alexander Schmemmann's *Great Lent*, or Thomas Hopko's *Lenten Spring*. And others will be better served by simplifying their study and using a method like the *Lectio Divina* to digest the truth given in the readings of the season. Gospel readings are especially well suited for this form of instruction. Dom Marmion describes this devotional method poetically:

We read	(<i>Lectio</i>)
under the eye of God	(<i>Meditatio</i>)
until the heart is touched	(<i>Oratio</i>)
and leaps to flame.	(<i>Contemplatio</i>) ¹²

The *Lectio's* easy movement from reading (the *lectio*) to meditation (the *meditatio*) to responsive prayer (the *oratio*), finally coming to rest in whatever grace God gives (the *contemplatio*), may be just the antidote to a worldly and overactive mind. Regardless of the approach we settle on, studying Holy Scripture reveals both God and the true form of man in Christ. With prayerful attention, Scripture becomes a vessel for transformation. If Lent is a passage from death to life, then Scripture provides the landmarks for the journey.

Included in this booklet are prayers, scriptural passages, and meditations, such as the Stations of the Cross, which can also be used for our instruction.

Prayer and the Aids to Prayer in this Booklet

If we are challenged to fast from food we are also invited to a feast of prayer during Lent. In monastic communities and in the Orthodox Church, this meant a doubling or tripling of the praying of the Psalter. The Psalms have always been the school of prayer for the Church, and a brief review of the New Testament will show how much the Psalms were in the hearts and prayers of both Christ and His Apostles. Our own prayer book tradition offers a monthly praying of the Psalter, and Lent offers a special opportunity for focused penitential prayer.

The section immediately following this one will include the Seven Penitential Psalms, which used to be recited entirely at the Ash Wednesday service during the imposition of ashes, and then again on Maundy Thursday when penitents were received back into communion. These psalms are the prayers of repentance *par excellence*. They minister both contrition and grace with profound beauty.

Other litanies and prayers of repentance and preparation are also included, and these may be especially helpful prior to Communion during Lent.

The weekly Collects¹³ are provided to gather us up with the Church as it travels towards the Passover celebration of Holy Week. These are followed, then, by a few classic devotional aids to bring us near to Christ and his Passion. We also provide a "prayer of committal," the baptismal vows for which Lent prepares us to make or renew. We complete the booklet with notes on the Holy Week services, an Easter homily from a "golden-tongued" preacher named John and a capstone from one of the earliest Paschal sermons.

The springtime of the Fast has dawned,
The flower of repentance has begun to open.
O brethren, let us cleanse ourselves from all impurity
And sing to the Giver of Light:
Glory be to Thee, who alone lovest mankind.¹⁴

The Seven Penitential Psalms¹⁵

Psalms 6. *Domine, ne in furore.*

David's prayer of supplication in time of trial.

- 1 LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger; *
do not punish me in your wrath.
- 2 Have pity on me, LORD, for I am weak; *
heal me, LORD, for my bones are racked.
- 3 My spirit shakes with terror; *
how long, O LORD, how long?
- 4 Turn, O LORD, and deliver me; *
save me for your mercy's sake.
- 5 For in death no one remembers you; *
and who will give you thanks in the grave?
- 6 I grow weary because of my groaning; *
every night I drench my bed
and flood my couch with tears.
- 7 My eyes are wasted with grief *
and worn away because of all my enemies.
- 8 Depart from me, all evildoers, *
for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping.
- 9 The LORD has heard my supplication; *
the LORD accepts my prayer.
- 10 All my enemies shall be confounded and quake with fear;
they shall turn back and suddenly be put to shame.

Psalms 32. *Beati quorum.*

A Psalm of David—Candid Admission of Sin

- 1 Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, *
and whose sin is put away!
- 2 Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt, *
and in whose spirit there is no guile!

- 3 While I held my tongue, my bones withered away, *
because of my groaning all day long.
- 4 For your hand was heavy upon me day and night; *
my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.
- 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you, *
and did not conceal my guilt.
- 6 I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." *
Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.
- 7 Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in
time of trouble; *
when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.
- 8 You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble; *
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.
- 9 "I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you
should go; *
I will guide you with my eye.
- 10 Do not be like horse or mule, which have
no understanding; *
who must be fitted with bit and bridle,
or else they will not stay near you."
- 11 Great are the tribulations of the wicked; *
but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.
- 12 Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD; *
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

Psalms 38. Domine, ne in furore.

A Psalm of David—Prayer in Distress and Sickness

- 1 O LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger; *
do not punish me in your wrath.
- 2 For your arrows have already pierced me, *
and your hand presses hard upon me.
- 3 There is no health in my flesh,
because of your indignation; *
there is no soundness in my body, because of my sin.

- 4 For my iniquities overwhelm me; *
like a heavy burden they are too much for me to bear.
- 5 My wounds stink and fester *
by reason of my foolishness.
- 6 I am utterly bowed down and prostrate; *
I go about in mourning all the day long.
- 7 My loins are filled with searing pain; *
there is no health in my body.
- 8 I am utterly numb and crushed; *
I wail, because of the groaning of my heart.
- 9 O Lord, you know all my desires, *
and my sighing is not hidden from you.
- 10 My heart is pounding, my strength has failed me, *
and the brightness of my eyes is gone from me.
- 11 My friends and companions draw back from my
affliction; *
my neighbors stand afar off.
- 12 Those who seek after my life lay snares for me; *
those who strive to hurt me speak of my ruin
and plot treachery all the day long.
- 13 But I am like the deaf who do not hear, *
like those who are mute and who do not open their mouth.
- 14 I have become like one who does not hear *
and from whose mouth comes no defense.
- 15 For in you, O LORD, have I fixed my hope; *
you will answer me, O Lord my God.
- 16 For I said, "Do not let them rejoice at my expense, *
those who gloat over me when my foot slips."
- 17 Truly, I am on the verge of falling, *
and my pain is always with me.
- 18 I will confess my iniquity *
and be sorry for my sin.
- 19 Those who are my enemies without cause are mighty, *
and many in number are those who wrongfully hate me.
- 20 Those who repay evil for good slander me, *
because I follow the course that is right.

21 O LORD, do not forsake me; *
be not far from me, O my God.

22 Make haste to help me, *
O Lord of my salvation.

Psalm 51. Miserere mei, Deus.

*David's Prayer of contrition when the prophet Nathan
had come to him because he had gone to Bathseba*

- 1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your
loving-kindness; *
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
- 2 Wash me through and through from my wickedness *
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3 For I know my transgressions, *
and my sin is ever before me.
- 4 Against you only have I sinned *
and done what is evil in your sight.
- 5 And so you are justified when you speak *
and upright in your judgment.
- 6 Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, *
a sinner from my mother's womb.
- 7 For behold, you look for truth deep within me, *
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.
- 8 Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; *
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.
- 9 Make me hear of joy and gladness, *
that the body you have broken may rejoice.
- 10 Hide your face from my sins *
and blot out all my iniquities.
- 11 Create in me a clean heart, O God, *
and renew a right spirit within me.
- 12 Cast me not away from your presence *
and take not your holy Spirit from me.
- 13 Give me the joy of your saving help again *

and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

- 14 I shall teach your ways to the wicked, *
and sinners shall return to you.
- 15 Deliver me from death, O God, *
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness,
O God of my salvation.
- 16 Open my lips, O Lord, *
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
- 17 Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, *
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.
- 18 The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; *
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
- 19 Be favorable and gracious to Zion, *
and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
- 20 Then you will be pleased with the appointed sacrifices,
with burnt-offerings and oblations; *
then shall they offer young bullocks upon your altar.

Psalm 102. Domine, exaudi.

Prayer in misfortune and affliction.

- 1 LORD, hear my prayer, and let my cry come before you; *
hide not your face from me in the day of my trouble.
- 2 Incline your ear to me; *
when I call, make haste to answer me,
- 3 For my days drift away like smoke, *
and my bones are hot as burning coals.
- 4 My heart is smitten like grass and withered, *
so that I forget to eat my bread.
- 5 Because of the voice of my groaning *
I am but skin and bones.
- 6 I have become like a vulture in the wilderness, *
like an owl among the ruins.
- 7 I lie awake and groan; *
I am like a sparrow, lonely on a house-top.

- 8 My enemies revile me all day long, *
and those who scoff at me have taken an oath against me.
- 9 For I have eaten ashes for bread *
and mingled my drink with weeping.
- 10 Because of your indignation and wrath *
you have lifted me up and thrown me away.
- 11 My days pass away like a shadow, *
and I wither like the grass.
- 12 But you, O LORD, endure for ever, *
and your Name from age to age.
- 13 You will arise and have compassion on Zion,
for it is time to have mercy upon her; *
indeed, the appointed time has come.
- 14 For your servants love her very rubble, *
and are moved to pity even for her dust.
- 15 The nations shall fear your Name, O LORD, *
and all the kings of the earth your glory.
- 16 For the LORD will build up Zion, *
and his glory will appear.
- 17 He will look with favor on the prayer of the homeless; *
he will not despise their plea.
- 18 Let this be written for a future generation, *
so that a people yet unborn may praise the LORD.
- 19 For the LORD looked down from his holy place on high; *
from the heavens he beheld the earth;
- 20 That he might hear the groan of the captive *
and set free those condemned to die;
- 21 That they may declare in Zion the Name of the LORD, *
and his praise in Jerusalem;
- 22 When the peoples are gathered together, *
and the kingdoms also, to serve the LORD.
- 23 He has brought down my strength before my time; *
he has shortened the number of my days;
- 24 And I said, "O my God,
do not take me away in the midst of my days; *

your years endure throughout all generations.

25 In the beginning, O LORD, you laid the foundations
of the earth, *

and the heavens are the work of your hands;

26 They shall perish, but you will endure;
they all shall wear out like a garment; *
as clothing you will change them,
and they shall be changed;

27 But you are always the same, *
and your years will never end.

28 The children of your servants shall continue, *
and their offspring shall stand fast in your sight."

Psalms 130. De profundis.

1 Out of the depths have I called to you, O LORD;
LORD, hear my voice; *
let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.

2 If you, LORD, were to note what is done amiss, *
O LORD, who could stand?

3 For there is forgiveness with you; *
therefore 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 watchmen for the morning, *
more than watchmen for the morning.

6 O Israel, wait for the LORD, *
for with the LORD there is mercy;

7 With him there is plenteous redemption, *
and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

Psalm 143. Domine, exaudi.

A Psalm of David—A Humble Plea

- 1 LORD, hear my prayer,
and in your faithfulness heed my supplications; *
answer me in your righteousness.
- 2 Enter not into judgment with your servant, *
for in your sight shall no one living be justified.
- 3 For my enemy has sought my life;
he has crushed me to the ground; *
he has made me live in dark places like those who
are 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 spread out my hands to you; *
my soul gasps to you like a thirsty land.
- 7 O LORD, make haste to answer me; my spirit fails me; *
do not hide your face from me
or I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.
- 8 Let me hear of your loving-kindness in the morning,
for I put my trust in you; *
show me the road that I must walk,
for I lift up my soul to you.
- 9 Deliver me from my enemies, O LORD, *
for I flee to you for refuge.
- 10 Teach me to do what pleases you, for you are my God; *
let your good Spirit lead me on level ground.
- 11 Revive me, O LORD, for your Name's sake; *
for your righteousness' sake, bring me out of trouble.
- 12 Of your goodness, destroy my enemies
and bring all my foes to naught, *
for truly I am your servant.

A Short Litany of Penitence¹⁶

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

God the Father, of heaven,

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

God the Holy Spirit,

Holy Trinity, One God,

Jesus, who did come to seek and to save that which was lost,

Who did send John before you to preach repentance,

Who did forgive the many sins of Mary Magdalene,

Who did promise Paradise to the Penitent Thief,

Who did no sin, and yet bore our sins on the tree,

Who was bruised for our iniquities,

Who gives time and place for repentance,

Who of your goodness leads us to repentance,

Who after repentance remembers our sins no more,

Have mercy upon us.

From all evil,

Good Lord, deliver us.

From all sin,

Good Lord, deliver us.

From a sudden and unprepared death,

Good Lord, deliver us.

By your baptism and holy fast

Good Lord, deliver us.

By your labors and sorrows,

Good Lord, deliver us.

By your Blood shed for the forgiveness of our sins

Good Lord, deliver us.

In the day of tribulation and anguish

Good Lord, deliver us.

In the hour of death and in the day of judgment,

Good Lord, deliver us.

We sinners do beseech you to hear us, that it may please you to bring us to true repentance,

That condemning ourselves, we may escape your condemnation,

We beseech you to hear us.

That we may bring forth fruit worthy of repentance,

We beseech you to hear us.

That all bitterness and anger be put away from us,

We beseech you to hear us.

That we be not desirous of vain-glory,

We beseech you to hear us.

That we may resist the wiles of the devil,

We beseech you to hear us.

That we may work out our salvation with fear and trembling,

We beseech you to hear us.

That being dead to sin, we may live unto righteousness,

We beseech you to hear us.

That it may please you to purge us here, and to spare us in eternity,

We beseech you to hear us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,

Spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,

Hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,

Have mercy upon us.

Let us pray.

O God, who desires not the death of a sinner; mercifully look on the weakness of our mortal nature and of your great mercy accept our repentance, that through your pity we may obtain remission of our sins, steadfastness in your service, and finally the reward which you have promised to those who persevere. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lenten Prayer of St Ephraim the Syrian¹⁷

○ Lord and Master of my life, cast from me the spirit of sloth, despondency, lust for power and idle talk.

But grant unto me, Thy servant, a spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love.

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brothers and sisters. For Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

○ God, cleanse Thou me a sinner.

Prayers of Preparation for Communion

The Church is called to fast during Lent, but the one feast that is offered without interruption is the sustaining feast of the coming Kingdom. While we are always responsible to prepare ourselves to receive Communion, we are especially conscious of the need during Lent.

Anima Christi (An Aspiration of St Ignatius)¹⁸

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me;
Blood of Christ, inebriate me;
Water from the side of Christ, wash me;
Passion of Christ, strengthen me;
O good Jesus, hear me;
Within thy wounds hide me;
Suffer me not to be separated from thee;
From the malicious enemy defend me;
In the hour of my death call me,
And bid me come to thee.
That with thy Saints I may praise thee
For ever and ever. Amen.

Other Prayers

As I approach your Table, O Lord, let these holy gifts be for me the healing of soul and body, the repelling of every adversary, the illumining of the eyes of my heart, the peace of my spiritual powers, a faith unashamed, a love unfeigned, the fulfilling of wisdom, the observing of Thy commandments, the receiving of Thy divine grace, and the attaining of Thy Kingdom. Consume me not, O my Creator, but instead enter into my members, my veins, my heart... may every evil thing, every carnal passion flee from me as from a fire as I become Thy tabernacle through communion.¹⁹

Most gracious God, incline your merciful ears to my prayer, and enlighten my heart by the grace of the Holy spirit; that I may worthily receive your holy food and drink, and love you with an everlasting love.

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name.

Enkindle, O Lord, our hearts and minds with the fire of the Holy Spirit: that we may serve thee with a pure body and please thee with a clean heart.

We beseech you, O Lord that the Comforter, who proceeds from you, may enlighten our minds: and lead us into all truth, as your Son has promised.

Purify our consciences, we beseech you, O Lord, by your visitation: that our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, when he comes, may find in us a mansion prepared for him. Who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world with out end. Amen.²⁰

The Lenten Collects

Ash Wednesday

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Sunday in Lent

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan; Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Second Sunday in Lent

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Third Sunday in Lent

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Preparing to Renew the Baptismal Vows

The Examination

Question Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?

Answer I renounce them.

Question Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?

Answer I renounce them.

Question Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?

Answer I renounce them.

Question Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Savior?

Answer I do.

Question Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?

Answer I do.

Question Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?

Answer I do.

The Baptismal Covenant

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Celebrant Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

People I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

People I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

People I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

People I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

People I will, with God's help.

Prayers & Devotions for Fridays, Holy Week, and other Days of Fasting

The Three Hours Devotion or The Seven Last Words²¹

Opening Sentences

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord has afflicted me. *Lamentations 1:12.*

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. *Isaiah 53:6.*

An Opening Prayer

O God, heavenly Father, send your blessed Spirit upon us at this time as we meditate on the passion and self-offering of your Incarnate Son. May our minds be so illumined with understanding and our hearts uplifted with thankfulness that we may dedicate ourselves anew to our discipleship in Him who gave his life for us upon the cross to be our Savior and Redeemer forever and ever. Amen.

Opening Reading:

And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn son. In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.

Zechariah 12:10; 13:1 (NKJV)

O Savior of the world, who by thy Cross and precious blood has redeemed us: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

The First Word

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. *Luke 23:34*

Other readings: Isaiah 53:4—end; Psalm 51:10-17; Luke 23:32-34

Lord Jesus, thou who has given us an example of loving understanding and forgiveness, pour into our hearts and minds such a measure of thy grace that we too may love those from whom

we may be estranged. Fill us with a compelling desire to understand and to forgive that we in turn may be found worthy of their forgiveness. In such wise permit us to share in establishing thy Kingdom where peace and brotherhood shall reign for ever and ever. Amen.

O Savior of the world, who by thy Cross and precious blood has redeemed us: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

The Second Word

Today thou shall be with me in Paradise. *Luke 23:43*

Other readings: Romans 8:31—end; Psalm 16:7—end or Psalm 32; Luke 23:39-43

O Lord Jesus, whose mercy is unfailing and whose compassion was even greater than the contrition of the penitent thief, forgive us miserable sinners, we beseech thee. Though we be guiltless of such sins as crucified the malefactors who were hanged with thee on Calvary, we stand in thy judgment. Look with mercy upon us. O Lord, and grant us thy grace that when our earthly pilgrimage is ended we too may live with thee for ever and ever. Amen

O Savior of the world, who by thy Cross and precious blood has redeemed us: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

The Third Word

Woman, behold thy son! *John 19:26,27*

Other readings: 2 Cor 5:16-19; Psalm 85.8—end; John 19:26-27

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself: strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.²²

O Savior of the world, who by thy Cross and precious blood has redeemed us: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

The Fourth Word

My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? *Matthew 27:46*

Other readings: Hebrews 5: 7-9; Psalm 22:1-22; Mark 15:34

O most loving Father, who wills us to give thanks for all things, to dread nothing but the loss of

you, and to cast all our care on you, who cares for us; preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, and grant that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested unto us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The almighty Lord, who is a most strong tower to all those who put their trust in him, to whom all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, do bow and obey; be now and evermore our defense; and make us know and feel that there is none other Name under heaven given to man, in whom, and through whom, we may receive strength and salvation, but only the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

O Savior of the world, who by thy Cross and precious blood has redeemed us: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

The Fifth Word

I Thirst. *John 19:28*

Other readings: Isaiah 55:1-11; Psalm 42 and 43; John 19:28-29

Lord Jesus, from whom floweth the water welling up to eternal life, grant that men everywhere may receive such comfort and strength from you that they may never again thirst for any greater need in this world. So strengthened by thy spiritual gifts, may they serve you faithfully and effectively to thy honor and glory this day and forever more. Amen.

O Savior of the world, who by thy Cross and precious blood has redeemed us: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

The Sixth Word

It is finished. *John 19:30*

Other readings: Isaiah 63:1-9; Psalm 40; John 19:30

Lord Jesus, who even in thy tender years was about your Father's business, and with devotion dedicated yourself to the accomplishment of His will, grant that we too may know and fulfill in our lives the purpose God has designed for us. May we thus lose our lives to find life that when our earthly pilgrimage is finished we may serve thee in thy heavenly Kingdom where you reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

O Savior of the world, who by thy Cross and precious blood has redeemed us: Save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.

The Seventh Word

Father, into thy hands, I commend my spirit. *Luke 23:46*

Other readings: Philippians 1:20-23; Psalm 31; Luke 23:46

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 Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and 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 shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. AMEN.

O Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

Grant us thy peace.

O Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

Have mercy upon us.

O Christ, hear us.

O Christ, hear us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

The Lord's Prayer

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, has sent your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind, should follow the example of his great humility; mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Revelation 1:5b-7(NKJV)

Prayers on the Passion²⁵

Morning Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearer sits dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

It was the third hour;
And they crucified him.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, at the third hour you were led out to the pain of the cross for the salvation of the world; by the virtue of your saving passion blot out our sins and bring us to the glory of your eternal joy, for you are alive and reign, God, now and for ever.

Mid-Day When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself.

Jesus, remember me
When you come in your kingly power.

Most gracious Jesus, our Lord and our God, who at this hour bore our sins in your body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness, have mercy on us, now and at the hour of death; and grant us, with all your people who now recall your saving passion, a holy and peaceful life in this world, and, through your grace, eternal glory in the life to come, where, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, you are alive and reign, one God, now and for ever.

Afternoon When he suffered, he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judges justly.

Even here your hand shall lead me;
And your right hand shall hold me.

Hear us, merciful Jesus, and remember the hour in which you commended your spirit into the hands of your heavenly Father; by this your most precious death help us, that being dead to the world we may live to you alone; and that at the hour of leaving this mortal life we may be received into your eternal kingdom, there to reign with you for ever and ever.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who at the ninth hour with outstretched hands and bowed head commended your spirit to God the Father, and by your death unlocked the gates of paradise; grant that in the hour of our death we may come to know you, the true paradise, for ever and ever.

O God of all the nations of the earth, remember those who, though created in your image, are ignorant of your love; and in fulfillment of the sacrifice of your Son Jesus Christ, let the prayers and labors of your Church deliver them from false faith and

unbelief, and bring them to worship you; through him who is the resurrection and the life of all who put their trust in you, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, set your passion, cross, and death between your judgement and us, now and at the hour of our death. Give mercy and grace to the living, rest to the faithful departed, to your holy Church peace and concord, and to us sinners eternal life and glory; for you are alive and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Lord Jesus, by the loneliness of your suffering on the cross, be near to all who are desolate and in pain and sorrow; and let your presence transform their sorrow into comfort, and their loneliness into fellowship with you; for the sake of your tender mercy.

Lord God our heavenly Father, regard, we pray, with your divine pity the pains of all your children; and grant that the passion of our Lord and his infinite love may make fruitful for good the tribulations of the innocent, the sufferings of the sick, and the sorrows of the bereaved; through him who suffered in our flesh and died for our sake, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ.

Gracious Lord Jesus, who died on the cross for us; remember all who are sick and dying. May they neglect nothing which is necessary to making their peace with you before they die; save them from the snares of sin and evil; and bring them to a perfect end; for the sake of your loving mercy.

Blessed be your name, O Jesu, Son of the most high God; blessed be the sorrow you suffered when your holy hands and feet were nailed to the tree; and blessed be your love when, the fullness of pain accomplished, you gave your soul into the hands of the Father; so by your cross and precious blood redeeming all the world, all longing souls departed and the numberless unborn; for you are now alive and reign in the glory of the eternal Trinity, one God for ever and ever.

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We praise you, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, for you submitted to the discipline of a son's obedience, and perfectly revealed in your death the loving nature of the Father.

We praise you, Lord Jesus Christ, Son of Man, for as champion of man and for his sake you entered the battle against evil, and won the complete victory over its power.

We praise you, Lord Jesus Christ, Servant of God, for you accepted the suffering of those who seek to be at one with those they serve, and by your sacrifice made us one with God.

Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for all the benefits you have won for us, for all the pains and insults you have borne for us. Most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly,

day by day.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Lord Jesus Christ, who, about to institute your holy sacrament at the Last Supper, washed the feet of the apostles, and taught us by your example the grace of humility; cleanse us, we pray, from all stain of sin, that we may be prepared to share your holy mysteries; for you are alive and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

God, our Judge and Savior, set before us the vision of your purity, and let us see our sins in the light of your holiness. Pierce our self-contentment with the shafts of your burning love, and let that love consume all that hinders us from the perfect service of your kingdom; for as your holiness is our judgement, so are your wounds our salvation.

'My God, why have you forsaken me?'

Lord Jesus Christ, who for us endured the horror of deep darkness; teach us by the depth of your agony the vileness of our sin, and so bind us to yourself in bonds of gratitude and love, that we may be united with you in your perfect sacrifice, our Savior, our Lord, and our God.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me,
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, refresh me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Within your wounds hide me.
Let me never be separated from you.
From the power of darkness defend me.
In the hour of my death, call me
And bid me come to you,
That with your saints I may praise you
For ever and ever.

After Communion

Lord, we have celebrated the memorial of your Son's eternal sacrifice. By his passion guard and defend us; by his wounds heal us; by his blood wash us from sin; by his death bring us to everlasting glory; for in him is the fulfillment of our hopes and longings, now and for ever.

Lord God, whose Son is the true vine and the source of life, ever giving himself that the world might live; may we so receive within ourselves the power of his death and passion, that, in this cup of his life, we may share his glory and be made perfect in his love; for he is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now

and forever.

We adore you, Christ, and we bless you;

Because by your holy cross

You have redeemed the world.

Savior of the world, you have redeemed us by your passion and cross.

Save us and help us, we humbly pray.

Ending

The glorious passion of our Lord Jesus Christ bring us to the joys of paradise.

The Good Friday Reproaches

*Church of England, 1998*²⁶

My people, what wrong have I done to you?

What good have I not done for you?

Listen to me.

1

I am your Creator, Lord of the universe;

I have entrusted this world to you,

but you have created the means to destroy it.

My people, what wrong have I done to you?

What good have I not done for you?

Listen to me.

2

I made you in my image,

but you have degraded body and spirit

and marred the image of your God.

You have deserted me and turned your backs on me.

My people, what wrong have I done to you?

What good have I not done for you?

Listen to me.

3

I filled the earth with all that you need,

so that you might serve and care for one another,

as I have cared for you;

but you have cared only to serve your own wealth and power.

Holy God,

holy and strong,

holy and immortal,

have mercy upon us.

My people, what wrong have I done to you?

What good have I not done for you?

Listen to me.

4

I made my children of one blood

to live in families rejoicing in one another;

but you have embittered the races

and divided the nations.

My people, what wrong have I done to you?

*What good have I not done for you?
Listen to me.*

5
I commanded you to love your neighbour as yourself,
to love and forgive even your enemies;
but you have made vengeance your rule
and hate your guide.
*My people, what wrong have I done to you?
What good have I not done for you?
Listen to me.*

6
In the fullness of time I sent you my Son,
that in him you might know me,
and through him find life and peace;
but you put him to death on the cross.
**Holy God,
holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.**
*My people, what wrong have I done to you?
What good have I not done for you?
Listen to me.*

7
Through the living Christ, I called you into my Church
to be my servants to the world,
but you have grasped at privilege
and forgotten my will.
*My people, what wrong have I done to you?
What good have I not done for you?
Listen to me.*

8
I have given you a heavenly gift
and a share in the Holy Spirit;
I have given you the spiritual energies
of the age to come;
but you have turned away
and crucified the Son of God afresh.
*My people, what wrong have I done to you?
What good have I not done for you?
Listen to me.*

9

I have consecrated you in the truth;
I have made you to be one
in the unity of the Father and the Son,
by the power of the Spirit;
but you have divided my Church
and shrouded my truth.

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

Turn again, my people, listen to me.

Let your bearing to one another
arise out of your life in Christ Jesus.
He humbled himself
and in obedience accepted the death of the cross.
But I have bestowed on him
the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus,
every knee should bow
and every tongue confess,
Jesus Christ is Lord.

Turn again, my people, listen to me.

**Father, hear our prayer and forgive us.
Unstop our ears
that we may receive the gospel of the cross.
Lighten our eyes
that we may see your glory
in the face of your Son.
Penetrate our minds
that your truth may make us whole.
Irradiate our hearts with your love
that we may love one another for Christ's sake.
Father, forgive us.**

The Sacrifice

By George Herbert, 1633

OH all ye, who pass by, whose eyes and mind
To worldly things are sharp, but to me blind;
To me, who took eyes that I might you find:
Was ever grief like mine?

The Princes of my people make a head
Against their Maker: they do wish me dead,
Who cannot wish, except I give them bread;
Was ever grief like mine?

Without me each one, who doth now me brave,
Had to this day been an Egyptian slave.
They use that power against me, which I gave:
Was ever grief like mine?

Mine own Apostle, who the bag did bear,
Though he had all I had, did not forbear
To sell me also, and to put me there:
Was ever grief like mine?

For thirty pence he did my death devise,
Who at three hundred did the ointment prize,
Not half so sweet as my sweet sacrifice:
Was ever grief like mine?

Therefore my soul melts, and my hearts' dear treasure
Drops blood (the only beads) my words to measure:
O let this cup pass, if it be thy pleasure:
Was ever grief like mine?

These drops being temper'd with sinners tears
A Balsam are for both the Hemispheres:
Curing all wounds, but mine; all, but my fears:
Was ever grief like mine?

Yet my Disciples sleep; I cannot gain
One hour of watching; but their drowsy brain
Comforts not me, and doth my doctrine stain:
Was ever grief like mine?

Arise, arise, they come. Look how they run!

Alas! what haste they make to be undone!
How with their lanterns do they seek the sun!
Was ever grief like mine?

With clubs and staves they seek me, as a thief,
Who am the Way and Truth, the true relief;
Most true to those, who are my greatest grief:
Was ever grief like mine?

Judas, dost thou betray me with a kiss?
Canst thou find hell about my lips? and miss
Of life, just at the gates of life and bliss?
Was ever grief like mine?

See, they lay hold on me, not with the hands
Of faith, but fury: yet at their commands
I suffer binding, who have loos'd their bands
Was ever grief like mine?

All my Disciples fly; fear puts a bar
Betwixt my friends and me. They leave the star,
That brought the wise men of the East from far.
Was ever grief like mine?

Then from one ruler to another bound
They lead me; urging, that it was not sound
What I taught: Comments would the test confound.
Was ever grief like mine?

The Priest and rulers all false witness seek
'Gainst him, who seeks not life, but is the meek
And ready Paschal Lamb of this great week:
Was ever grief like mine?

Then they accuse me of great blasphemy,
That I did thrust into the Deity,
Who never thought that any robbery:
Was ever grief like mine?

Some said, that I the Temple to the floor
In three days raz'd, and raised as before.
Why, he that built the world can do much more:
Was ever grief like mine?

Then they condemn me all with that same breath,
Which I do give them daily, unto death.
Thus Adam my first breathing rendereth:
Was ever grief like mine?

They bind, and lead me unto Herod: he
Sends me to Pilate. This makes them agree;
But yet their friendship is my enmity:
Was ever grief like mine?

Herod and all his bands do set me light,
Who teach all hands to war, fingers to fight,
And only am the Lord of Hosts and might:
Was ever grief like mine?

Herod in judgement sits, while I do stand;
Examines me with a censorious hand:
I him obey, who all things else command:
Was ever grief like mine?

The Jews accuse me with despitefulness;
And vying malice with my gentleness,
Pick quarrels with their only happiness:
Was ever grief like mine?

I answer nothing, but with patience prove
If stony hearts will melt with gentle love.
But who does hawk at eagles with a dove?
Was ever grief like mine?

My silence rather doth augment their cry;
My dove doth back into my bosom fly,
Because the raging waters still are high:
Was ever grief like mine?

Hark how they cry aloud still, Crucify:
It is not fit he live a day, they cry,
Who cannot live less then eternally:
Was ever grief like mine?

Pilate, a stranger, holdeth off; but they,
Mine own dear people, cry, Away, away,
With noises confused frightening the day:
Was ever grief like mine?

Yet still they shout, and cry, and stop their ears,
Putting my life among their sins and fears,
And therefore wish my blood on them and theirs:
Was ever grief like mine?

See how spite cankers things. These words aright
Used, and wished, are the whole world's light:
But honey is their gall, brightness their night:
Was ever grief like mine?

They choose a murderer, and all agree
In him to do themselves a courtesy:
For it was their own case who killed me:
Was ever grief like mine?

And a seditious murderer he was:
But I the Prince of peace; peace that doth pass
All understanding, more then heav'n doth glass:
Was ever grief like mine?

Why, Caesar is their only King, not I:
He clave the stony rock, when they were dry;
But surely not their hearts, as I well try:
Was ever grief like mine?

Ah! how they scourge me! yet my tenderness
Doubles each lash: and yet their bitterness
Winds up my grief to a mysteriousness:
Was ever grief like mine?

They buffet him, and box him as they list,
Who grasps the earth and heaven with his fist,
And never yet, whom he would punish, miss'd:
Was ever grief like mine?

Behold, they spit on me in scornful wise,
Who by my spittle gave the blind man eyes,
Leaving his blindness to my enemies:
Was ever grief like mine?

My face they cover, though it be divine.
As Moses face was veiled, so is mine,
Lest on their double-dark souls either shine:

Was ever grief like mine?

Servants and abjects flout me; they are witty:
Now prophesy who strikes thee, is their ditty.
So they in me deny themselves all pity:

Was ever grief like mine?

And now I am deliver'd unto death,
Which each one calls for so with utmost breath,
That he before me well nigh suffereth:

Was ever grief like mine?

Weep not, dear friends, since I for both have wept
When all my tears were blood, the while you slept:
Your tears for your own fortunes should be kept:

Was ever grief like mine?

The soldiers lead me to the common hall;
There they deride me, they abuse me all:
Yet for twelve heav'nly legions I could call:

Was ever grief like mine?

Then with a scarlet robe they me array;
Which shows my blood to be the only way
And cordial left to repair mans decay:

Was ever grief like mine?

Then on my head a crown of thorns I wear:
For these are all the grapes Zion doth bear,
Though I my vine planted and watered there:

Was ever grief like mine?

So sits the earth's great curse in Adams fall
Upon my head: so I remove it all
From th' earth unto my brows, and bear the thrall:

Was ever grief like mine?

Then with the reed they gave to me before,
They strike my head, the rock from thence all store
Of heav'nly blessings issue evermore:

Was ever grief like mine?

They bow their knees to me, and cry, Hail king:
What ever scoffs & scornfulness can bring,

I am the floor, the sink, where they it fling:
Was ever grief like mine?

Yet since man's scepters are as frail as reeds,
And thorny all their crowns, bloody their weeds;
I, who am Truth, turn into truth their deeds:
Was ever grief like mine?

The soldiers also spit upon that face,
Which Angels did desire to have the grace,
And Prophets, once to see, but found no place:
Was ever grief like mine?

Thus trimmed, forth they bring me to the rout,
Who Crucify him, cry with one strong shout.
God holds his peace at man, and man cries out:
Was ever grief like mine?

They lead me in once more, and putting then
Mine own clothes on, they lead me out again.
Whom devils fly, thus is he toss'd of men:
Was ever grief like mine?

And now weary of sport, glad to engross
All spite in one, counting my life their loss,
They carry me to my most bitter cross:
Was ever grief like mine?

O all ye who pass by, behold and see;
Man stole the fruit, but I must climb the tree;
The tree of life to all, but only me:
Was ever grief like mine?

Lo, here I hang, charg'd with a world of sin,
The greater world o' th' two; for that came in
By words, but this by sorrow I must win:
Was ever grief like mine?

Such sorrow as, if sinful man could feel,
Or feel his part, he would not cease to kneel.
Till all were melted, though he were all steel:
Was ever grief like mine?

But, O my God, my God! why leav'st thou me,

The son, in whom thou dost delight to be?
My God, my God -----

Never was grief like mine.

Shame tears my soul, my body many a wound;
Sharp nails pierce this, but sharper that confound;
Reproaches, which are free, while I am bound.

Was ever grief like mine?

Now heal thy self, Physician; now come down.
Alas! I did so, when I left my crown
And father's smile for you, to feel his frown:

Was ever grief like mine?

In healing not my self, there doth consist
All that salvation, which ye now resist;
Your safety in my sickness doth subsist:

Was ever grief like mine?

Betwixt two thieves I spend my utmost breath,
As he that for some robbery suffereth.
Alas! what have I stolen from you? Death.

Was ever grief like mine?

A king my title is, prefixt on high;
Yet by my subjects am condemn'd to die
A servile death in servile company:

Was ever grief like mine?

They give me vinegar mingled with gall,
But more with malice: yet, when they did call,
With Manna, Angels food, I fed them all:

Was ever grief like mine?

They part my garments, and by lot dispose
My coat, the type of love, which once cured those
Who sought for help, never malicious foes:

Was ever grief like mine?

Nay, after death their spite shall further go;
For they will pierce my side, I full well know;
That as sin came, so Sacraments might flow:

Was ever grief like mine?

But now I die; now all is finished.
My woe, mans weal: and now I bow my head.
Only let others say, when I am dead,
Never was grief like mine.

Notes & Collects for Holy Week

Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday

The Collect

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Service: Its Actions & Themes

The service begins with the Blessing of the Palms, and the processional, which includes the entire congregation. The tone of the service is celebratory and it involves the people in a coronation-like ceremony. We receive our King as we commemorate His entrance into Jerusalem. We wave palms before Him as signs of the acclaim we mean to give Him with our lives.

The joyful coronation quickly turns to the paradox of a thorny crown as we learn in the Passion Reading that our Lord's Kingdom is inaugurated through His suffering and death. His Kingdom is not of this world's order, and, indeed, this world has misunderstood and rejected Him. The same who received Him as King, nail Him to a cross that is derisively labeled, "King of the Jews." We, likewise, by our own sin, show a fundamental misunderstanding and rebellion. The hopes we attach to Him, the requests we make of Him, are often of this world's order. Our understanding and humility are grown only through the remembrance of His passion, which is now begun in earnest. Our palms are laid aside and kept to be burned for next year's Ash Wednesday service. We are discovering a different order, a Way that is higher than ours. To everything else we must die as we follow Jesus in His sufferings.

Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday of Passion Week

These three days lay the final preparations for the Triduum (the "three holy days" of Thursday, Friday and Saturday). The Gospels include Christ's preparation for burial by the anointing of Mary, an event that contrasts sharply the values of His Kingdom compared to those of this world, as personified in Judas. Likewise, Jesus' anger with the money changers reveals the fact that the Kingdom's currency is prayer alone. The theme is completed with the betrayal of Judas to the Pharisees for money. Our own betrayal of Christ for the wealth of this world is slowly revealed in the prayers and lessons of these days. We are called to faithful prayer as we anticipate the overthrow of all other powers of world, flesh and devil.

Monday's Collect

Almighty God, whose dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Monday's Gospel: Mark 14:3-9

Tuesday's Collect

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Tuesday's Gospel: Mark 11:15-19

Wednesday `s Collect

Lord God, whose blessed Son our Savior gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Wednesday's Gospel: Matthew 26:1-5, 14-25

Maundy Thursday

The Collect

Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Liturgical Actions & Themes:

Maundy Thursday starts the Triduum, and it does so with a day full of new riches for the Church. Its central theme is the Institution of the Eucharist with the commemoration of the Last Supper. Several other actions occur: the washing of feet, the blessing of oil for the mission of the Church, a brief commemoration of His agony and abandonment, and the Watch.

The day takes its name from the Latin word for commandment ("mandatum"), and it refers to the New Commandment of Christ to His disciples: to love one another. The washing of the feet and the Communion we share by His generosity each express this new way of love, which He both gives and then calls forth from us. Similarly, the blessing of the oil provides the Church with a Sacramental that enables it to love those in need of physical and spiritual healing.

During the Eucharist, the Celebrant will bless enough bread to provide Eucharist to the church on Good Friday. These "presanctified" elements are processed from the sanctuary altar to the altar of repose where watch will be kept through the night.

Also, in keeping with the new mission given to the Church, the priests will renew their ordination vows. Whether this is done publicly or not, the renewal of these vows provides a stark contrast to the commemoration later portrayed by the priests at the end of the service: as it draws to a close, the priests strip the altar of its hangings (a symbol of the stripping and dividing of Christ's garments), they "scour" its surface (a symbol of Christ's scourging), and then they scatter (a symbol in action of the disciples' abandonment of Christ). This is done in silence or while Psalm 22 is recited or sung. Following this, all silently retire from the sanctuary and are invited to "watch with Christ" before the Altar of Repose.

Prayers for the Watch

The watch provides two themes for meditation and prayer. First, it allows for an extended meditation on the Eucharist: Christ's presence to us in bread and wine; and, secondly, on the themes of the night's events: Christ's prayer for unity, his agony, his abandonment, his mocking, his trial, his scourging. The first easily comes to mind at the Altar of Repose, and the second can be observed either in the Sanctuary or at the Altar of Repose.

Suggested Themes for Meditation and Prayer

- Read the story of the Agony of Jesus in the Garden (Mathew 26:30-end; Luke 22:31-62; Mark 14:26-end)
- Psalm 88
- God's presence to us at all times: Psalm 139:1-16
- Christ's hour has come; His farewell discourse, & His prayer for the Church: John 13-17

*"Who would know Sin let him repair
Unto Mount Olivet; there shall he see
A man so wrung with pains, that all his hair,
His skin, his garments bloody be.
Sin is that press and vice, which forceth pain
To hunt his cruel food through ev'ry vein."²⁷*

Good Friday

The Collect

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

Liturgical Actions & Themes:

Christ is in the hands of the authorities, He is condemned to die, led to the "place of the skull" and crucified for our sins. The Church has long considered this a day of strict fasting and even the Eucharist, which occurs in the evening service, is provided not by a new Celebration but from the reserved or presanctified elements of Maundy Thursday.

The day may include a Three Hour Devotion (using the Seven Last Words of Christ) or a Stations of the Cross.

The main service is in the evening and begins with the bare altar, the veiled cross, and a silent processional. The Liturgy of the Word breaks the silence and quickly focuses our attention on the objective fact of Christ's sacrifice:

Isaiah prophesies the Lord's suffering for our sins;
David provides what becomes Christ's own prayer on the cross with Psalm 22,
Hebrews shows how His cleansing blood gives us access to the Holy of Holies in Heaven, and
John's Passion gives dramatic and majestic moment to Christ's sacrificial death.

The Liturgy is completed with the Solemn Collects, which translate the purpose of His sacrifice

into the prayers of the Church. As the preface puts it, "Dear People of God: Our heavenly Father sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved; that all who believe in him might be delivered from the power of sin and death, and become heirs with him of everlasting life. We pray, therefore, for people everywhere according to their needs."

The service then moves to the Veneration of the Cross. The Cross is processed into the church stopping at three stations. These are the same stations at which the risen "Light of Christ" will be proclaimed on the following night (the Easter Vigil). At each station the Deacon proclaims: "Behold the wood of the Cross on which was hung the world's salvation." The people respond, "Come, let us adore him." A period of veneration, prayer and prostration begins.

The service is completed with the nourishing provision of Christ's "Last Supper." The words of Institution, though not said, echo in our hearts: "Take, eat: This is my body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of Me." "Drink this, all of you: This is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

The service ends as it began, in silence.

Further Meditation on Good Friday

The Litany of the Passion

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven,

Have mercy upon us. (repeat after each stanza)

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

God the Holy Spirit,

Holy Trinity, One God,

Jesu, instituting the Blessed Sacrament,

Jesu, sold for thirty pieces of silver,

Jesu, betrayed by a kiss,

Jesu, taken before Annas and Caiaphas,

Jesu, judged worthy of death,

Jesu, spit upon, blindfolded, and struck with blows,

Jesu, hated without cause,

Jesu, thrice denied by thine Apostle,

Jesu, rejected for a murderer,
Jesu, condemned to death by Pilate,
Jesu, bruised and scourged for our iniquities,
Jesu, mocked and set at nought by Herod,
Jesu, laden with the cross and led to Calvary,
Jesu, nailed to the cross,
Jesu, raised up on the cross,
Jesu, obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,
Jesu, bearing our sins in thine own body on the tree,
Jesu, by whose stripes we are healed,
Have mercy upon us.

From all evil,
Good Lord, deliver us (repeat after each stanza)
From unbelief and hardness of heart,
From any denial of thee,
From sloth, unwatchfulness, and deadness of heart,
By thine agony and bloody sweat,
By thy buffetings and stripes,
By thy crown of thorns,
By thy cross and passion,
By thy thirst, tears, and nakedness,
By thy sacred wounds,
By thy most precious blood-shedding,
By the anguish of thy Heart upon the cross,
By thy last exceeding great and bitter cry,
By thy most precious death,
By thy burial and descent into hell,
Good Lord, deliver us

We sinners beseech thee to hear us, that we may die unto sin and live unto holiness,
That we may take up our cross daily and follow thee,
That we may perfectly know thee the Crucified,
That we may never crucify thee afresh,
That being made partakers of thy sufferings, we may be also of thy consolations,
We beseech thee to hear us, Good Lord.

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
Spare us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
Hear us, O Lord.

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
Have mercy upon us.

The Lord be with you,
And with thy spirit.

O Lord Jesus Christ, our merciful High Priest, who didst offer to the Father a pure offering, to reconcile sinners unto God by the infinite merits of thy life, thy passion, and thy death; give us grace, we beseech Thee, to die to the world, and live to thee alone, and finally depart in peace, through thy merits. Who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

Melito of Sardis: A Homily on the Pascha (The Passover of Christ)

And so he was lifted up upon a tree and an inscription was provided too, to indicate who was being killed. Who was it? It is a heavy thing to say, and a most fearful thing to refrain from saying. But listen, as you tremble in the face of him on whose account the earth trembled. He who hung the earth in place is hanged. He who fixed the heavens in place is fixed in place. He who made all things fast is made fast on the tree. The Master is insulted. God is murdered. The King of Israel is destroyed by an Israelite hand.

O unheard of murder, O unheard of injustice! The Master, his body naked, has had his appearance altered, and he is not even deemed worthy of a garment to keep him from being seen. That is why the stars turned aside in their courses and the daylight was obscured, so as to conceal him who was stripped naked on the Tree—not obscuring the Lord's body, but the eyes of these people. Though the people did not tremble, the earth trembled. Though the people were not afraid, the heavens were afraid. Though the people did not rend their garments, the angel did. Though the people did not wail and lament, 'The Lord thundered from heaven and the Most High gave forth his voice.' [Ps. 18:13].

The Lord, when he had put on the human being and suffered for the sake of him who suffered and was bound for the sake of him who was imprisoned and was judged for the sake of the condemned and was buried for the sake of the buried, rose from the dead and cried aloud, 'Who will enter into judgment against me? Let him stand up and face me. I have set the condemned free. I have given the dead life. I have raised up the one who was entombed. Who will speak against me? I,' he says, 'the Christ, I have dissolved death, I have triumphed over the enemy and trodden down Hades and bound the strong man and carried off humanity into the height of the heavens—I' he says, 'the Christ.'

So come, all families of human beings who are defiled by sins, and receive remission of sins. For I am your remission, I am the Passover of salvation. I am the Lamb sacrificed for your sake. I am your ransom. I am your life. I am your resurrection. I am your light. I am your salvation. I am your King. I lead you toward the heights of heaven. I will show you the eternal Father. I will raise you up with my right hand.¹²⁸

Holy Saturday

The day is a quiet one. We remember our Lord's death, entombment, and the "Harrowing of Hell" for our salvation. The fast is in its final hours as we remember that by His dying, death is destroyed. We are heirs now to an indestructible life because of His destroyed one. But, like the earth and the heavens at the crucifixion, the places "below the earth" tremble because they cannot hold Him. We join the Orthodox in this hymning of Christ's descent into the realm of death:

Be ye astonished, O ye heavens, be ye horribly afraid, and let the foundations of the earth be shaken. For lo, He who dwells on high is numbered with the dead and lodges as a stranger in a narrow tomb. Him do ye children bless, ye priests praise, and ye people exalt above all for ever.

The most pure Temple is destroyed, but raises up the fallen tabernacle. The second Adam, He who dwells on high, has come down to the first Adam in the depths of hell. Him do ye children bless, ye priests praise, and ye people exalt above all for ever.

Today a tomb holds Him who holds the creation in the hollow of His hand; a stone covers Him who covered the heavens with glory. Life sleeps and hell trembles, and Adam is set free from his bonds. Glory to Thy dispensation, whereby Thou hast accomplished all things, granting us an eternal Sabbath, Thy most holy Resurrection from the dead.

What is this sight that we behold? What is this present rest? The King of the ages, having through His Passion fulfilled the plan of salvation, keeps Sabbath in the tomb, granting us a new Sabbath. Unto Him let us cry aloud: Arise, O Lord, judge Thou the earth, for measureless is Thy great mercy and Thou dost reign for ever.

Come, let us see our Life lying in the tomb, that He may give life to those that in their tombs lie dead. Come, let us look today on the Son of Judah as He sleeps, and with the prophet let us cry aloud to Him: Thou has lain down, Thou has slept as a lion; who shall awaken Thee, O King? But of Thine own free will do Thou rise up, who willingly dost give Thyself for us. O Lord, glory to Thee.

.this is the blessed Sabbath, this is the day of rest, on which the only-begotten Son of God rested from all His works. Suffering death in accordance with the plan of salvation, He kept the Sabbath in the flesh; and returning once again to what He was, through His Resurrection He has granted us eternal life, for He alone is good and loves mankind.

Today hell groans and cries aloud: `My dominion has been swallowed up; the Shepherd has been crucified and He has raised Adam. I am deprived of those whom once I ruled; in my strength I devoured them, but now I have cast them forth. He

who was crucified has emptied the tombs; the power of death has no more strength.'
Glory to Thy Cross, O Lord, and to Thy Resurrection.²⁹

Easter Vigil

We have come to the fulfillment of our prayers, our fasting and preparation. We have arrived at the peak of the Church's liturgical year. This is the Feast of Feasts. We celebrate with great drama and ringing joy, the rising of our Lord who has won salvation for us all.

The Service, Its Actions and Themes:

The Feast of Light: The service begins in the dark. The doors of the sanctuary are pounded three times three. The doors open and Celebrant with Deacon and Acolyte enter with the new Paschal Candle. The action is a celebration of the "everlasting doors" being lifted up so that the King of Glory can come in. The Celebrant then inaugurates the Festival of Light by carving the Alpha and the Omega, along with the year, on the Paschal Candle saying, "Christ yesterday and today; the beginning and the end; Alpha and Omega; all time belongs to him; and all the ages; to him be glory and power through every age for ever and ever. Amen." Five wax nails with incense in them are inserted into the candle while the Celebrant says, "By his holy and glorious wounds may Christ our Lord guard us and keep us. Amen." Signified in this simple action is the realization that our prayers become incense to God through Christ's wounds and by the power of His Risen Light. The Celebrant continues with a prayer that we may burn with heavenly desires, and thereby attain to the festival of everlasting light. The procession moves further in and "The Light of Christ" is announced at each Station where the cross had been proclaimed on Good Friday. With our Lord we move from darkness to light, from death to life. We proclaim with the Deacon the Risen Light of Christ that vanquishes all darkness; we hymn our Lord who "broke the bonds of death and hell and rose victorious from the grave."

The Liturgy of the Word: We celebrate God's saving grace throughout the history of his people.

The Feast of Water: We reaffirm our Baptismal Vows, we bless the waters with the Risen Light of the Paschal candle, and we baptize the catechumens, who now join us in death to world, flesh and devil, and life to the Risen Christ and His Kingdom. The procession from the font, when needed, includes the antiphon: "I saw water proceeding out of the temple, from the right side thereof; and all they to whom that water came shall be saved."

The Easter Eucharist: The Lord is Risen! The bells of Easter are rung, and Alleluias are sung for the first time since we began our Forty Day Fast. The Fifty Day Feast of Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost has begun on the pivot of this first "Alleluia."

We are released from the fast, but more importantly, we are called to feast! No sermon captures this call to celebration better than this one from John "Golden Mouth" Chrysostom.

The Easter Sermon of St. John Chrysostem, circa 400

Are there any who are devout lovers of God?
Let them enjoy this beautiful bright festival!

Are there any who are grateful servants?
Let them rejoice and enter into the joy of their Lord!

Are there any weary with fasting?
Let them now receive their wages!

If any have toiled from the first hour,
let them receive their due reward;
If any have come after the third hour,
let him with gratitude join in the Feast!
And he that arrived after the sixth hour,
let him not doubt; for he too shall sustain no loss.
And if any delayed until the ninth hour,
let him not hesitate; but let him come too.
And he who arrived only at the eleventh hour,
let him not be afraid by reason of his delay.
For the Lord is gracious and receives the last even as the first.
He gives rest to him that comes at the eleventh hour,
as well as to him that toiled from the first.

To this one He gives, and upon another He bestows.
He accepts the works as He greets the endeavor.
The deed He honors and the intention He commends.
Let us all enter into the joy of the Lord!

First and last alike receive your reward;
rich and poor, rejoice together!
Sober and slothful, celebrate the day!
You that have kept the fast, and you that have not,
rejoice today for the Table is richly laden!

Feast royally on it, the calf is a fatted one.
Let no one go away hungry. Partake, all, of the cup of faith.
Enjoy all the riches of His goodness!

Let no one grieve at his poverty,
for the universal kingdom has been revealed.

Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again;

for forgiveness has risen from the grave.

Let no one fear death, for the Death of our Savior has set us free.
He has destroyed it by enduring it.
He destroyed Hell when He descended into it.
He put it into an uproar even as it tasted of His flesh.

Isaiah foretold this when he said,
"You, O Hell, have been troubled by encountering Him below."
Hell was in an uproar because it was done away with.
It was in an uproar because it is mocked.
It was in an uproar, for it is destroyed.
It is in an uproar, for it is annihilated.
It is in an uproar, for it is now made captive.

Hell took a body, and discovered God.
It took earth, and encountered Heaven.
It took what it saw, and was overcome by what it did not see.

O death, where is thy sting?
O Hell, where is thy victory?

Christ is Risen, and you, o death, are annihilated!
Christ is Risen, and the evil ones are cast down!
Christ is Risen, and the angels rejoice!
Christ is Risen, and life is liberated!

Christ is Risen, and the tomb is emptied of its dead;
for Christ having risen from the dead,
is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.
To Him be Glory and Power forever and ever. Amen!

End Notes:

¹ Herbert, George, "Lent", *George Herbert, The Country Parson, The Temple*, Paulist Press, 1981, New Jersey, 1981, p. 204.

² Ware, Archimandrite Kallistos, in "The Meaning of the Great Fast," an introduction to *The Lenten Triodion*, translated by Ware and Mother Mary, St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, PA, 2002, page 13.

³ Cf. 1 Cor 13:12; Isaiah 43:19.

⁴ "Lead, Kindly Light" by John H. Newman, 1833.

⁵ From the *Exultet*, sung by the Deacon on Easter Vigil.

⁶ Schmemmann, Alexander, *Great Lent*, SVS Press, NY pp. 49, 50.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁹ Ware, *Ibid.*, page 17

¹⁰ *The Apostolic Fathers, Vol. II*, transl. By Lake, Kirsopp, Harvard University Press, p. 161.

¹¹ Our Sunday Lectionary is a three year cycle with different readings for each year. As this summary of themes implies, the texts may change but the underlying Lenten "build" towards Easter remains fairly consistent from year to year.

¹² As quoted by Thelma Hall in her book, *The Methodless Method*

¹³ The weekly "gathering prayers" or Collects of the Prayer Book are also excellent summaries of the truths taught by the liturgical season.

¹⁴ Ware, *Ibid.*, page 23

¹⁵ From the Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church of the USA, 1979.

¹⁶ From *St. Augustine's Prayer Book*, Preservation Press, 1998, p. 138, 139

¹⁷ Ware, p. 69

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 119 forward.

¹⁹ Schemann, p. 48, from the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts

²⁰ *St. Augustine's Prayer Book*, 119 forward.

²¹ Collects taken from an Order of Service of St. Thomas Church, NY, NY with one noted exception, and other suggested readings are provided by *Common Worship of the Church of England*.

²² Collect for Mothering Sunday, *Common Worship of the Church of England*, Church House Publishing, London, England, 2000, p. 396.

²⁵ *Lent Holy Week Easter Services and Prayers*, Church House Publishing, London, England, 1998, p. 91

²⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 207-210. These are a completely updated version of the ancient Latin Reproaches.

²⁷ An excerpt from "The Agony" by George Herbert.

²⁸ Norris, Richard A., editor, *The Christological Controversy*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, PA, 1980, pp. 46, 47.

²⁹ Ware, pp 652-656