

# The Lententide Family Altar

BRIEF DAILY LENTEN DEVOTIONS



ALSO INCLUDED

The History of the Passion and Death  
of Our Lord and Savior  
Jesus Christ



## Isaiah 53

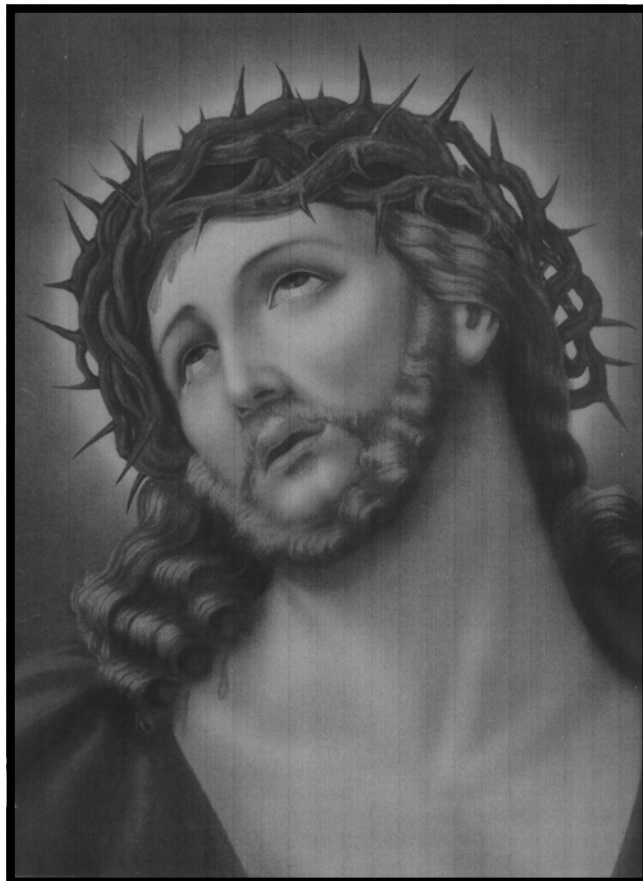
*Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; He was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*



The History  
of the  
Passion and Death  
of  
Our Lord and Savior  
Jesus Christ

*Twelve Scripture readings for the weeks of Lent*

*Compiled by Martin Chemnitz according to the Four Evangelists*





## Ash Wednesday

### FIRST LESSON

And when they had sung an hymn, Jesus came out, and went forth, as He was wont, over the brook Cedron [SEE-drun] into the Mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him. Then saith Jesus unto them, "*All ye shall be offended because of Me this night, for it is written, 'I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.'* But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." But Peter answered and said unto Him, "*Though all shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.*" And Jesus saith unto him, "*Verily I say unto thee, that this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice.*" But he spake the more vehemently, "*If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise.*" Likewise also said all the disciples.

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, where was a garden, into the which He entered and His disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, knew the place; for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples. Then said Jesus unto the disciples, "*Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.*"

And He took with Him Peter, and James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sore amazed, and sorrowful, and very heavy. Then said He unto them, "*My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with Me, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.*" And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and fell on His face on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him; and He said, "*Abba [AH-bah], Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me; nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt.*" And He cometh unto His disciples and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, "*Simon, sleepest thou?? Couldst not thou watch with Me one hour? Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak.*" He went away again the second time and prayed, saying, "*O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me except I drink it, Thy will be done.*" And when He returned, He found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy), neither wist they what to answer Him. And He left them, and went away again and prayed the third time the same words, saying, "*Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done.*"

And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven strengthening Him. And, being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, "*Sleep on now, and take your rest! Why sleep ye?*"

*It is enough; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, and let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray Me. Pray, however, lest ye enter into temptation.”*

## SECOND LESSON

And immediately, while He yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the Twelve, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees and the scribes and the elders of the people, went before the multitude; and they came thither with lanterns and torches, with swords and staves. Now he that betrayed Him had given them a sign, saying, *“Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He; take Him, hold Him fast, and lead Him away safely.”* Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth and said unto them, *“Whom seek ye?”* They answered Him, *“Jesus of Nazareth.”* Jesus said unto them, *“I AM He.”* And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon, then, as He had said unto them, *“I AM He,”* they went backward and fell to the ground. Then asked He them again, *“Whom seek ye?”* And they said, *“Jesus of Nazareth.”* Jesus answered, *“I have told you that I AM He. If, therefore, ye seek Me, let these go their way;”* that the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, *“Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none.”*

And Judas drew near unto Jesus to kiss Him; and he goeth straightway to Him and saith, *“Hail, Master!”* and kissed Him. And Jesus said unto him, *“Friend, wherefore art thou come? Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss??”* Then came they and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. When they which were about Him saw what would follow, they said unto Him, *“Lord, shall we smite with the sword?”* Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, *“Put up thy sword into the sheath; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it? But how, then, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be? Suffer ye thus far.”* And He touched his ear, and healed him.

In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, the chief priests, and captains of the Temple and the elders, which were come to Him, *“Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take Me? I was daily with you teaching in the Temple, and ye stretched forth no hands against Me; but this is your hour and the power of darkness, for the Scriptures must be fulfilled.”* But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.

Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.



## First Week in Lent

### THIRD LESSON

Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound Him, and led Him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. And then they led Him away to Caiaphas, the high priest, where all the chief priests and the scribes and the elders were assembled.

And Simon Peter followed Jesus afar off unto the high priest's palace, and, so did another disciple. That disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, for it was cold; and they warmed themselves; and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself, to see the end. Then one of the maids of the high priest, the damsel that kept the door, when she saw Peter as he sat by the fire warming himself, earnestly looked upon him and said, "*And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?*" But he denied before them all, saying, "*Woman, I know Him not, neither understand I what thou sayest!*"

The high priest then asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine. Jesus answered him, "*I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the Temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask them which heard Me, what I have said unto them. Behold, they know what I said.*" And when He had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "*Answerest Thou the high priest so?*" Jesus answered him, "*If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me?*" Now Annas had sent Him bound unto Caiaphas, the high priest.

### FOURTH LESSON

And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. And after a little while (after the first denial), as he went out into the porch, the cock crew. And another maid saw him and began to say to them that stood by, "*This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.*" They said, therefore, unto him, "*Art not thou also one of His disciples?*" And another said, "*Thou art also of them.*" And again he denied it with an oath, saying, "*Man, I am not; I do not know the man.*" And after a little while, about the space of one hour, another confidently affirmed, saying, "*Of a truth this fellow also was with Him; for he is a Galilean.*" Then came they that stood by and said to Peter, "*Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto and bewrayeth thee.*" One of the

servants of the high priest, being his kinsman, whose ear Peter cut off, saith, "*Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?*" Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, "*I know not this man of whom ye speak.*" And immediately, as he yet spake, the cock crew the second time. And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word that Jesus said unto him, "*Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice.*" And he went out and wept bitterly.

Now the chief priests and elders and all the council sought false witness against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none; yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none; for their witness agreed not together. At the last there arose and came two false witnesses and bare false witness against Him, the one saying, "*This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days;'*" and the other, "*We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this Temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.'*" But neither so did their witness agree together.

And the high priest arose, and stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, "*Answerest Thou nothing? What is it which these witness against Thee?*" But Jesus held His peace and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, and said unto Him, "*Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.*" Jesus saith unto him, "*Thou hast said: I AM. Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*" Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, "*He hath spoken blasphemy! What further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard His blasphemy. What think ye?*" And they all condemned Him, answered and said, "*He is guilty of death!*"

And the men that held Jesus mocked Him, and some began to spit in His face and to buffet Him; and others, when they had blindfolded Him, struck Him on the face with the palms of their hands, especially the servants. And they asked Him, saying, "*Prophecy unto us, Thou Christ, Who is he that smote Thee?*" And many other things blasphemously spake they against Him.

And as soon as it was day, all the chief priests and the elders of the people and the scribes came together, and took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death. And they led Him into their council, saying, "*Art Thou the Christ? Tell us.*" And He said unto them, "*If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I also ask you, ye will not answer Me, nor let Me go. Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God.*" Then said they all, "*Art Thou, then, the Son of God?*" And He said unto them, "*Ye say that I am.*" And they said, "*What need we any further witness? For we ourselves have heard of His own mouth.*"

## Second Week in Lent

### FIFTH LESSON

And the whole multitude of them arose, and bound Jesus, and led Him away from Caiaphas unto the Hall of Judgment, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate, the governor; and it was early.

Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, *“I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.”* And they said, *“What is that to us? See thou to that.”* And he cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself, and burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, *“It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.”* And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field to bury strangers in. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem, insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue *Acelanda* [*ah-sell-DAH-mah*], that is to say, The field of blood. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, *“And they took the thirty pieces of silver, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord appointed me.”*

And the Jews themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. Pilate then went out unto them and said, *“What accusation bring ye against this man?”* They answered and said unto him, *“If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto thee.”* Then said Pilate unto them, *“Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law.”* The Jews, therefore, said unto him, *“It is not lawful for us to put any man to death;”* that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spake, signifying what death He should die.

And they, the chief priests and elders, began to accuse Him of many things, saying, *“We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a king.”* Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto Him, *“Art Thou the king of the Jews?”* And Jesus stood before him and answered, *“Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?”* Pilate answered, *“Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me. What hast Thou done?”* Jesus answered, *“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence.”* Pilate, therefore, said unto Him, *“Art Thou a king, then?”* Jesus answered, *“Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice.”* Pilate saith unto Him, *“What is truth?”* And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews and saith unto them, *“I find in Him no fault at all.”* And when He was accused of

the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. And Pilate asked Him again, saying, *“Answerest Thou nothing? Behold how many things they witness against Thee. Hearest Thou not?”* And He answered him to never a word, insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

### SIXTH LESSON

And they were the more fierce, saying, *“He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.”*

When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that He belonged unto Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad; for he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned with Him in many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. And Herod with his men of war set Him at naught, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themselves.

And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, said unto them, *“Ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverteth the people; and, behold, I, having examined Him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse Him; no, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him, and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto Him. I will, therefore, chastise Him and release Him.”* Now at that feast the governor must of necessity release unto the people a prisoner, whomsoever they desired. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in a certain sedition made in the city. And the multitude, crying aloud, began to desire Pilate to do as he had ever done unto them. Therefore, when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, *“Ye have a custom that I should release unto you one at the Passover. Whom will ye that I release unto you, Barabbas, or Jesus, which is called Christ, the King of the Jews?”* For he knew that the chief priests had delivered Him for envy.

When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, *“Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him.”*

But the chief priests and elders persuaded and moved the people that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus; and they cried out all at once, saying, *“Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas.”* Pilate, therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them, *“What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ, the King of the Jews?”* And they cried out again, *“Crucify Him, crucify Him!”* And he said unto them the third time, *“Why? What evil hath He done? I have found no cause of death in Him. I will, therefore, chastise Him and let Him go.”* But they cried out the more, saying, *“Let Him be crucified!”* And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

## Third Week in Lent

### SEVENTH LESSON

Then Pilate, therefore, took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers of the governor led Him away into the common hall, called *Praetorium* [*pray-TOH-ree-oom*]; and they called together the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped Him and clothed Him with purple, putting on Him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head and a reed in His right hand; and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, and began to salute Him, saying, “*Hail, King of the Jews!*” And they smote Him with their hands, and they spit upon Him, and took the reed and smote Him on the head, and, bowing their knees, worshiped Him.

Pilate, therefore, went forth again, and said unto them, “*Behold, I bring Him forth unto you that ye may know that I find no fault in Him.*” Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, “*Behold the man!*” When the chief priests, therefore, and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, “*Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*” Pilate said unto them, “*Take ye Him and crucify Him; for I find no fault in Him.*” The Jews answered him, “*We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.*”

When Pilate, therefore, heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the judgment hall and said unto Jesus, “*Whence art Thou?*” But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto Him, “*Speakest Thou not unto me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee?*” Jesus answered, “*Thou couldest have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above; therefore, he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.*” And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him; but the Jews cried out, saying, “*If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar’s friend! Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.*”

When Pilate, therefore, heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called *The Pavement*, but in the Hebrew, *Gabbatha* [*GAH-bah-tha*]. And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour; and he said unto the Jews, “*Behold your King!*” But they cried, “*Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!*” Pilate said unto them, “*Shall I crucify your king??*” The chief priests answered, “*We have no king but Caesar.*”

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he was willing to content the people, and gave sentence that it should be as they required, and took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “*I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it.*” Then answered all the people and said, “*His blood be on us and on our children!*”

Then released he Barabbas unto them, that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; and, when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to their will to be crucified.

### EIGHTH LESSON

And the soldiers took Jesus, and took off the purple robe from Him, and put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him. And He did bear His cross. And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene [sy-REE-nee], who passed by, coming out of the country, Simon by name, the father of Alexander and Rufus; him they compelled to bear His cross, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

And there followed Him a great company of people, and of women which also bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning unto them, said, "*Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming in the which ye shall say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.' Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?*"

And there were also two others, malefactors, led with Him to be put to death. And they bring Him unto the place which is called in the Hebrew, *Golgotha* [GAWL-go-tha], which is, being interpreted, *The place of a skull*. Then they gave Him vinegar (which is wine with myrrh) to drink, mingled with gall; and when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink.

And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and two thieves with Him, the one on His right hand and the other on His left, and Jesus in the midst. And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, "*And He was numbered with the transgressors.*" And it was the third hour as they crucified Him.

## Fourth Week in Lent

### NINTH LESSON

Then said Jesus, *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”* And Pilate wrote a title, the superscription of his accusation, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, *JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS*. This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, *“Write not, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that He said, ‘I am King of the Jews.’”* Pilate answered, *“What I have written, I have written.”*

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also His coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said, therefore, among themselves, *“Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,”* that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, *“They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots.”* And sitting down they watched Him there. These things, therefore, the soldiers did; and the people stood beholding.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, saw His mother and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, *“Woman, behold thy son.”* Then saith He to the disciple, *“Behold thy mother.”* And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

And they that passed by reviled Him, railed on Him, wagging their heads, and saying, *“Ah, Thou that destroyest the Temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself! If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross!”* Likewise the chief priests, mocking Him, said among themselves with the scribes and elders, *“He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be Christ, the King of Israel, the Chosen of God, let Him come down from the cross, that we may see and believe. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”* The thieves also which were crucified with Him cast the same in His teeth, and reviled Him. And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him, and offering Him vinegar, and saying, *“If Thou be the king of the Jews, save Thyself.”*

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, *“If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us.”* But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, *“Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss.”* And He said unto Jesus, *“Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.”* And Jesus said unto him, *“Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise.”*

## TENTH LESSON

And it was about the sixth hour; and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour; and the sun was darkened. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*” [*ay-LEE, ay-LEE, LAH-mah sabach-TAH-nee?*] that is to say, “*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken ME??*” Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, “*This man calleth for Elias.*” After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, “*I thirst.*” Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar; and one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it upon an hyssop (a reed), and put it to His mouth, and gave Him to drink, saying with the rest, “*Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come and take Him down.*”

When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, He said, “*It is finished!*” And when He had cried with a loud voice, He said, “*Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.*” And having said thus, He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.

And, behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many.

Now, when the centurion, which stood over against Him, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, and saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, and glorified God, saying, “*Certainly this was a righteous man and the Son of God.*” And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned.



## Fifth Week in Lent

### ELEVENTH LESSON

And all His acquaintance, and the women that followed Him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things, among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, the mother of Zebedee's children, (who also, when He was in Galilee, followed Him and ministered unto Him), and many other women which came up with Him unto Jerusalem.

The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs; but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "*A bone of Him shall not be broken.*" And again another Scripture saith, "*They shall look on Him whom they pierced.*"

### TWELFTH LESSON

And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, a rich man of Arimathea, a city of the Jews, Joseph, a counselor, a good man and a just, (the same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them), who also himself waited for the kingdom of God, and was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, this man came and went in boldly unto Pilate, and besought him that he might take away the body of Jesus.

And Pilate marveled if He were already dead; and, calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether He had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph, and commanded the body to be delivered. And Joseph bought fine linen. And there came also Nicodemus, (which at the first came to Jesus by night), and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wrapped it in the clean linen cloth, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulcher, Joseph's own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock, wherein was

never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus, therefore, because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulcher was nigh at hand. And they rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary (the mother of Joses), sitting over against the sepulcher. And the women also which came with Him from Galilee followed after, and beheld the sepulcher, and how His body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, "*Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while He was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Command, therefore, that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, 'He is risen from the dead.' So the last error shall be worse than the first.*" Pilate said unto them, "*Ye have a watch; go your way, make it as sure as ye can.*" So they went, and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

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# Scripture Reading for Holy Week

## Monday of Holy Week

### **Epistle:** Isaiah 50:5-10

<sup>5</sup> *The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.<sup>6</sup> I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.<sup>7</sup> For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.<sup>8</sup> He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me.<sup>9</sup> Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.<sup>10</sup> Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.*

### **Gospel:** John 12:1-23

<sup>1</sup> *Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.<sup>2</sup> There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.*

<sup>3</sup> *Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.<sup>4</sup> Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,<sup>5</sup> Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?<sup>6</sup> This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.<sup>7</sup> Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.<sup>8</sup> For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.*

<sup>9</sup> *Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.<sup>10</sup> But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;<sup>11</sup> Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.*

<sup>12</sup> *On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,<sup>13</sup> Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.<sup>14</sup> And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,<sup>15</sup> Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.<sup>16</sup> These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.*

<sup>17</sup> *The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.<sup>18</sup> For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.<sup>19</sup> The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.<sup>20</sup> And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:<sup>21</sup> The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.<sup>22</sup> Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.<sup>23</sup> And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.*

## Tuesday of Holy Week

### **Epistle:** Jeremiah 11:18-20

<sup>18</sup> *And the LORD hath given me knowledge of it, and I know it: then thou shewedst me their doings.<sup>19</sup> But I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him*

off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered.<sup>20</sup> But, O LORD of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto thee have I revealed my cause.

**Gospel: John 12:24-43**

<sup>24</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.<sup>25</sup> He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.<sup>26</sup> If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.<sup>27</sup> Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.<sup>28</sup> Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.<sup>29</sup> The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.<sup>30</sup> Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.<sup>31</sup> Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.<sup>32</sup> And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.<sup>33</sup> This he said, signifying what death he should die.<sup>34</sup> The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.<sup>36</sup> While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

<sup>37</sup> But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.<sup>38</sup> That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?<sup>39</sup> Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,<sup>40</sup> He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.<sup>41</sup> These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:<sup>43</sup> For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

**Wednesday of Holy Week**

**Epistle: Isaiah 62:11 to 63:7**

<sup>11</sup> Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.<sup>12</sup> And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.

63:1 Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.<sup>2</sup> Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?<sup>3</sup> I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.<sup>4</sup> For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.<sup>5</sup> And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.<sup>6</sup> And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.<sup>7</sup> I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

**Gospel: Luke 22:1 to 23:43**

<sup>1</sup> Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.<sup>2</sup> And the chief priests and

scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.<sup>3</sup> Then entered Satan into Judas sur-named Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.<sup>4</sup> And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.<sup>5</sup> And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.<sup>6</sup> And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

<sup>7</sup> Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.<sup>8</sup> And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.<sup>9</sup> And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?<sup>10</sup> And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.<sup>11</sup> And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?<sup>12</sup> And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.<sup>13</sup> And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

<sup>14</sup> And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.<sup>15</sup> And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:<sup>16</sup> For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.<sup>17</sup> And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:<sup>18</sup> For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.<sup>19</sup> And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.<sup>20</sup> Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.<sup>21</sup> But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.<sup>22</sup> And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!<sup>23</sup> And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.<sup>24</sup> And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.<sup>25</sup> And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.<sup>26</sup> But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.<sup>27</sup> For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.<sup>28</sup> Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.<sup>29</sup> And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;<sup>30</sup> That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>31</sup> And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:<sup>32</sup> But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.<sup>33</sup> And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.<sup>34</sup> And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

<sup>35</sup> And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.<sup>36</sup> Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.<sup>37</sup> For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.<sup>38</sup> And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

<sup>39</sup> And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.<sup>40</sup> And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.<sup>41</sup> And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,<sup>42</sup> Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.<sup>43</sup> And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.<sup>44</sup> And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly:

and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.<sup>45</sup> And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,<sup>46</sup> And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.<sup>47</sup> And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.<sup>48</sup> But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?<sup>49</sup> When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?<sup>50</sup> And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.<sup>51</sup> And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.<sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?<sup>53</sup> When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.<sup>54</sup> Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.

<sup>55</sup> And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.<sup>56</sup> But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.<sup>57</sup> And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.<sup>58</sup> And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.<sup>59</sup> And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean.<sup>60</sup> And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.<sup>61</sup> And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.<sup>62</sup> And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

<sup>63</sup> And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him.<sup>64</sup> And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that smote thee?<sup>65</sup> And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.<sup>66</sup> And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying,<sup>67</sup> Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe.<sup>68</sup> And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go.<sup>69</sup> Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.<sup>70</sup> Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.<sup>71</sup> And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

Ch23 And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.<sup>2</sup> And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.<sup>3</sup> And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.<sup>4</sup> Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.<sup>5</sup> And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

<sup>6</sup> When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean.<sup>7</sup> And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.<sup>8</sup> And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.<sup>9</sup> Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.<sup>10</sup> And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.<sup>11</sup> And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.<sup>12</sup> And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

<sup>13</sup> And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,<sup>14</sup> Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having exam-

ined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:<sup>15</sup> No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.<sup>16</sup> I will therefore chastise him, and release him.<sup>17</sup> (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)<sup>18</sup> And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:<sup>19</sup> (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)<sup>20</sup> Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.<sup>21</sup> But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.<sup>22</sup> And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.<sup>23</sup> And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.<sup>24</sup> And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.<sup>25</sup> And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

<sup>26</sup> And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.<sup>27</sup> And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.<sup>28</sup> But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.<sup>29</sup> For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.<sup>30</sup> Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.<sup>31</sup> For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

<sup>32</sup> And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.<sup>33</sup> And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.<sup>34</sup> Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

<sup>35</sup> And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.<sup>36</sup> And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,<sup>37</sup> And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.<sup>38</sup> And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.<sup>39</sup> And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.<sup>40</sup> But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?<sup>41</sup> And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing miss.<sup>42</sup> And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.<sup>43</sup> And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

## Maundy Thursday

### Epistle: I Corinthians 11:23-32

<sup>23</sup> For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:<sup>24</sup> And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.<sup>25</sup> After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.<sup>26</sup> For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.<sup>27</sup> Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.<sup>28</sup> But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.<sup>29</sup> For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.<sup>30</sup> For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.<sup>31</sup> For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.<sup>32</sup> But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

**Gospel: John 13:1-15**

*Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.<sup>2</sup> And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;<sup>3</sup> Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;*

*<sup>4</sup> He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.<sup>5</sup> After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.<sup>6</sup> Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?<sup>7</sup> Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.<sup>8</sup> Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.<sup>9</sup> Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.<sup>10</sup> Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.<sup>11</sup> For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.<sup>12</sup> So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?<sup>13</sup> Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.<sup>14</sup> If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.<sup>15</sup> For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*

## Good Friday

**Epistle: Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12**

*<sup>13</sup> Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.<sup>14</sup> As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.<sup>15</sup> So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.*

*53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?<sup>2</sup> For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.<sup>3</sup> He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.<sup>4</sup> Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.<sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.<sup>8</sup> He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.<sup>9</sup> And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.<sup>10</sup> Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.<sup>11</sup> He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.<sup>12</sup> Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*



**Gospel:** John 18:1 to 19:42

*18 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.<sup>2</sup> And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.<sup>3</sup> Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.<sup>4</sup> Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?<sup>5</sup> They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.<sup>6</sup> As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.<sup>7</sup> Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>8</sup> Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:<sup>9</sup> That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.<sup>10</sup> Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.<sup>11</sup> Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?*

*12 Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,<sup>13</sup> And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.<sup>14</sup> Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.<sup>15</sup> And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.<sup>16</sup> But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.<sup>17</sup> Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.<sup>18</sup> And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.*

*19 The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.<sup>20</sup> Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.<sup>21</sup> Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.<sup>22</sup> And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?<sup>24</sup> Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.*

*25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.<sup>26</sup> One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?<sup>27</sup> Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.*

*28 Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.<sup>29</sup> Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?<sup>30</sup> They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.<sup>31</sup> Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.<sup>32</sup> That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.*

*33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?*

*35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?<sup>36</sup> Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom*

not from hence.<sup>37</sup> Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.<sup>38</sup> Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.<sup>39</sup> But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?<sup>40</sup> Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

**19** Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.<sup>2</sup> And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,<sup>3</sup> And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.<sup>4</sup> Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.<sup>5</sup> Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!<sup>6</sup> When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.<sup>7</sup> The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.<sup>8</sup> When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;<sup>9</sup> And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.<sup>10</sup> Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?<sup>11</sup> Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

<sup>12</sup> And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.<sup>13</sup> When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.<sup>14</sup> And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!<sup>15</sup> But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.<sup>16</sup> Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.

<sup>17</sup> And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:<sup>18</sup> Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.<sup>19</sup> And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.<sup>20</sup> This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.<sup>21</sup> Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.<sup>22</sup> Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

<sup>23</sup> Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.<sup>24</sup> They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

<sup>25</sup> Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.<sup>26</sup> When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!<sup>27</sup> Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.<sup>28</sup> After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.<sup>29</sup> Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.<sup>30</sup> When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head,

and gave up the ghost.<sup>31</sup> The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.<sup>32</sup> Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.<sup>33</sup> But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:<sup>34</sup> But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.<sup>35</sup> And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.<sup>36</sup> For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.<sup>37</sup> And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

<sup>38</sup> And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.<sup>39</sup> And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.<sup>40</sup> Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.<sup>41</sup> Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.<sup>42</sup> There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

## Holy Saturday, Easter Eve

### **Epistle:** I Peter 3:17-22

<sup>17</sup> For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.<sup>18</sup> For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.<sup>19</sup> By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in Prison;<sup>20</sup> Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.<sup>21</sup> The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:<sup>22</sup> Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

### **Gospel:** Matthew 27:57-66

<sup>57</sup> When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:<sup>58</sup> He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.<sup>59</sup> And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,<sup>60</sup> And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.<sup>61</sup> And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

<sup>62</sup> Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,<sup>63</sup> Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.<sup>64</sup> Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.<sup>65</sup> Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.<sup>66</sup> So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.



The  
Lententide  
Family Altar

**BRIEF DAILY LENTEN DEVOTIONS**

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**THE FAMILY ALTAR**

by

F. W. Herzberger

## Ash Wednesday: The First Day in Lent

*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

John 1:29

John the Baptist points with uplifted finger to the approaching Jesus of Nazareth and exclaims: “*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*” His Jewish hearers could not mistake his meaning, for every day a spotless lamb was sacrificed before their eyes in the Temple as a propitiation for their sins. The lamb thus sacrificed was a prophetic symbol of the coming Savior, who, as the true Lamb of God, foretold by Isaiah (chapter 53), was to suffer and die and thus obtain eternal redemption for us. The sacred time of Lent repeats the message of John and again directs our attention to our suffering Savior. “*Behold,*” it cries with pleading and insistent voice, “*behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*” and therefore your sin! Will we not open our ears and hearts most reverently to its sacred, saving message and behold our Savior, not with indifferent eyes, as the unbelieving world beholds Him, nor with hate-filled, blasphemous eyes, as the Jews did and all mocking infidels do today, but with penitent and believing eyes, as did the dying thief on the right of our crucified Savior, who prayed to Him with a sincere, contrite, and believing heart: “*Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom,*” and who was pardoned and forever saved as the first-fruits of our Lord’s bitter Passion? Oh, blessed shall we be if we thus behold our suffering Lord! Then shall we also see with rejoicing and adoring hearts how He has taken away all our sin and guilt out of the sight of the holy God, how He has redeemed us forever from the power of the devil and gained for us the favor of His heavenly Father. And if death should come to us, we shall hear Him say to us what He once said to the dying thief: “*Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise.*”

*O Lamb of God most holy,  
all free from spot and stain,  
oh, help us now to serve Thee  
and sing Thy praise again!*

*O Lamb of God most lowly,  
so great and yet so meek;  
may we when pride allures us  
Thy lowly spirit seek!*

*O Lamb of God most gentle,  
so kind and good and true,  
may we when passion tempts us  
Thy gentleness pursue!*

*O Lamb of God most lovely,  
to Thee our faith would flee;  
reveal to us Thy beauty  
and keep our hearts with Thee!*

## Thursday after Ash Wednesday

*Then He took unto Him the Twelve and said unto them: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished."*

Luke 18:31

Of their own free will Adam and Eve fell away from God into sin and thus brought sin and woe and death on their children — the whole human race. Of His own free and loving will did the Son of God and Son of Man, our Lord Jesus Christ, go up to Jerusalem to enter on His vicarious Passion in order to redeem His brethren after the flesh — all the guilty sons of Adam. He took His twelve disciples with Him that they might be witnesses of His atoning death and become His messengers to proclaim its saving truth to all the world. We too, are asked to accompany our Lord on His way to Jerusalem in this holy time of Lent. We can do so only when we follow Him with attentive and reverent spirit to hear and see all the things that happened to Him at Jerusalem. Are we not the sinners for whose sake He suffers all these cruelties and tortures? Again, we must go with Him in a prayerful spirit. By nature we are blind concerning the true cause and the glorious fruit of our Lord's Passion. We are like the disciples, who, when Jesus spoke to them of His suffering and death, "*understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them.*" Does Lent prove of so little blessing to us because we pray so little for opened eyes during this solemn season? O let us sincerely cry to the Lord with the blind man at the gate of Jericho: "*Lord, that I may receive my sight,*" that is, that I may understand my guilty part and my personal redemption in Thy suffering. But the main thing is that we accompany our Lord in true faith and learn to say: "For me, for my salvation, dost Thou suffer thus, O my Lord and my God." With such humble, trusting faith in our heart, let us go with our Lord on His way to suffering and death; and may He bless every step we take with Him!

*A Lamb goes uncomplaining forth,*

*the guilt of all men bearing;*

*'tis laden with the sin of earth,*

*none else the burden sharing.*

*It goes its way, grows weak and faint,*

*to slaughter led without complaint,*

*its spotless life to offer;*

*bears shame, and stripes,*

*and wounds, and death,*

*anguish, and mockery, and saith,*

*"Willing all this I suffer."*

## Friday after Ash Wednesday

*God commendeth His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

Romans 5:8

Man can show no greater love than to die for his friends. No mortal, however, will think of giving up his life for outright enemies. What shall we say, then, of this wonderful love of God, who spared not His only-begotten Son, but gave Him into death that His enemies, we sinners, might live? Verily, such divine love passes all human understanding. But, again, what shall we say when we hear infidels declare that they cannot believe in this love of God nor in the atonement of Christ because it goes against their ideas of justice? “How can God be just if He can sentence His holy and innocent Son to death in the place of sinners?” they ask. “If this is not the worst kind of injustice to punish the innocent instead of the guilty, what, then, is injustice? No human judge would do such a wicked thing; how much less, then, a just and holy God!” But these poor, blind people only betray their woeful ignorance as regards both God’s justice and God’s love. Because something is impossible for man, does it follow that it must also be impossible for God? What does love, true love, mean? It means *sacrifice*. What sacrifices will not a loving father or mother bring for their children, especially for their sick, even for their *wayward* children, who are breaking their parents’ hearts with their sinful habits! How often do our hearts beat with glowing admiration when we read of heroic men who suffered death rather than leave their post of duty and thereby endanger the lives of utter strangers given into their charge! Now, if poor, sinful mortals can love to such an intense degree, why not God, the Source and Fountain of all love and mercy, in a much higher, in a truly *Godlike* degree, a degree that surpasses all the understanding of man? — Now God can pardon sinners because His *divine* justice is satisfied through His own *divine*, self-sacrificing love.

*O Thou God of Love, who hast manifested Thy wonderful, adorable love in Thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray Thee, draw our hearts to Thee through the story of our Savior’s sufferings and death and keep us Thine in life, in death, throughout eternity. Amen.*



## Saturday after Ash Wednesday

*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*

I Timothy 1:15.

While an epidemic of yellow fever was raging in our Southern States, a young man was stricken with the fatal disease and grew oblivious to all around him. Shortly before his death, however, his consciousness returned. When his pious sister, who nursed him, noticed it, she bent over him and asked, "Brother, you are about to leave us. What is your hope in death?" And the dying young man answered faintly, yet very distinctly, "Sister, this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and then peacefully passed away. That young man was ready to die because in his young life he had been brought to Jesus, his Savior. He evidently did not belong to the great number of young men and women who delay their repentance, disregard God's Word and the Sacraments, and so are unprepared if death should suddenly claim them. At the end of the World War I the world was ravaged by the mysterious disease known as the Spanish influenza. It claimed young men and women by the thousands also in our country. But even if we are spared the ravages of an epidemic, in the midst of life we are in death! Are we all, young and old, ready to meet our God when the summons comes? O let us follow the example of that young man in the South! Let us make Jesus our Savior from sin and death in daily personal faith. "*This is a faithful saying.*" We can stake our eternal happiness on it, for it is God's unfailing promise: Whoever believes in His dear Son shall never die. It is "*worthy of all acceptance.*" There is salvation for sinners in none other than in Jesus, *our* Jesus. So let us daily give ourselves to Him in penitent, humble faith, and we can depart this world in peace whenever it is God's will.

*My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

*When I shall launch to worlds unseen,  
Oh, may I then be found in Him,  
Dressed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne!  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

## The First Sunday in Lent

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.*

Matthew 5:9

Peace! Peace! cries our restless age; but there is no peace. Whichever way we look, we see the world filled with strife, hate, war, and bloodshed. And yet there is a glorious League of Peace, founded by God Himself, which has its societies among all the nations and peoples of the inhabited globe and whose meek and gentle members make peace wherever they go. Being justified by faith, they have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ and now consecrate themselves and their all to the service of the Prince of Peace. They make peace between man and God. They go with, or send, the Gospel of peace into the hovels of the poor, the prisons, the busy marts, or the quiet villages of civilization. They send it into the benighted heathen countries and everywhere proclaim: "*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them... Now we are ambassadors for Christ [and] pray you in His stead, Be ye reconciled to God!*" They make peace between man and man. Whenever opportunity offers, they will allay strife between quarreling brethren and bring them the blessings of concord and unity. Though for this labor of love they are criticized and maligned and mocked, they continue unwearied in their peacemaking efforts; for they are the "*children of God.*" Like father, like child. Their God and heavenly Father is a God of peace; they His sons and daughters, cannot be otherwise. Filled with His Spirit, they approve themselves God's peacemakers in the world. How about us? Are we satisfied with merely keeping the "public peace" or do we, as true children of God, conduct ourselves as peacemakers in our daily surroundings? May the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus; and in the power of His Holy Spirit may we approve ourselves blest peacemakers all the days of our life!

*Prince of Peace, control my will,  
bid this struggling heart be still,  
bid my fears and doubtings cease,  
hush my spirit into peace.*

*Thou hast bought me with Thy blood,  
opened wide the gate to God;  
peace I ask; but peace must be,  
Lord, in being one with Thee.*

*May Thy will, not mine, be done;  
may Thy will and mine be one;  
chase these doubtings from my heart;  
now Thy perfect peace impart.*

*Savior, at Thy, feet I fall;  
Thou my Life, my God, my All!  
Let Thy happy servant be  
one forevermore with Thee.*

## Monday after the First Sunday in Lent

*Without shedding of blood is no remission.*

Hebrews 9:22

Infidels take great offense at the Scriptural doctrine laid down in this text. "Behold," they cry in their hatred, "behold what a monster the God of the Bible is! He must first see the flow of blood before His wrath is satisfied. Why does He not simply *pardon* sinners if He is such a merciful God as the Bible declares?" We answer: Our God is indeed a merciful God, and He proved it supremely in giving His own dear Son to be a ransom for our sins. But our God is also a God of justice; and according to His justice He must punish sin, as all unbelievers will find to their terrible cost if they repent not in time. Now, the punishment for sin is death, as it is written: "*The wages of sin is death,*" Romans 6:23. This truth was taught in the Old Testament by the shedding of the blood of the animal sacrifices. When an Israelite had sinned, he had to bring a lamb or some other perfect animal to the Temple. This lamb became his substitute, taking his place. Being the sinner's substitute, it had to bear the punishment of his sin — its blood was shed. Thus the Israelite — received remission. "*Without shedding of blood is no remission.*" All those lambs sacrificed in the Temple pointed to Christ, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. His death, too, was vicarious; He endured it in our place. Since Christ is true *man*, His death availed for *men*, for human beings. But He is also true *God*; and therefore His death is of infinite value. By his sins man had offended the infinite justice of an infinite God. Therefore no mere man could by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him. All mere human sacrifices here would have proved insufficient. And therefore "*God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.*" Since it is God's own Son who shed His blood and died for us, His death more than satisfied the justice of God. In Him we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. In Him we are now *legally* free from all guilt and punishment. To Him be praise and glory forevermore!

*Not all the blood of beasts  
on Jewish altars slain  
could give the guilty conscience peace  
or wash away the stain.*

*But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,  
takes all our sins away,  
a sacrifice of nobler name  
and richer blood than they.*

*Believing, we rejoice  
to see the curse remove;  
we bless the Lamb with cheerful voice  
and sing His bleeding love.*

## Tuesday after the First Sunday in Lent

*Come, Lord Jesus!*

Revelation 22:20

The last verse in the last book of the Bible closes with the longing prayer, “*Come, Lord Jesus!*” Some day will see the end of time, when men shall no more need to add an extra day to the calendar; for then all time will have been swallowed up by eternity. Then the closing prayer of the Bible, the yearning prayer of all the saints of God of all the ages, will have been fulfilled, and Jesus will have come to judge the quick and the dead and to take His children of the Church Militant home to the Church Triumphant. He came once into our flesh to regain for us Paradise Lost. He comes daily to us in His blessed Gospel and offers us His pardoning grace for our sins, His sustaining comfort for all our sorrows, His saving help even in the hour of death. “*Behold,*” He says, “*I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with Me.*” that is, I will live in the most intimate union and communion with him and give him to partake of My grace and salvation. Oh, then, let us not hear Jesus’ Word in a forgetful, superficial manner, as so many do, but let us open the doors of our hearts to Him and His quickening Word; let us daily pray: “*Come into this heart of mine, Dearest Savior, make it Thine.*” And when He comes, be it for Judgment Day or in sudden death, we shall be ready to meet Him, to enter into the blessed abode of heaven, and to join all its singing hosts of redeemed sinners. May this grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all! Aye, come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

*Jesus comes to hearts rejoicing,  
bringing news of sins forgiv’n;  
Jesus comes in sounds of gladness,  
leading souls redeemed to heav’n.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Now the gate of death is riv’n.*

*Jesus comes in joy and sorrow,  
shares alike our hopes and fears;  
Jesus comes, whate’er befalls us,  
glads our hearts and dries our tears.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Cheering e’en our failing years.*

*Jesus comes on clouds triumphant  
when the heavens shall pass away;  
Jesus comes again in glory;  
let us, then, our homage pay,  
Alleluia! ever singing,  
till the dawn of endless day.*

## Wednesday after the First Sunday in Lent

*Zion shall be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness.*

Isaiah 1:27

Our God is a God of law and order. Man, His creature, must worship and obey Him according to His divine Law or suffer the punishment for sinning. Even his redemption or release from sin and punishment must be accomplished “*with judgment*” and “*with righteousness*,” in a lawful manner. “When a mob breaks into a jail and sets a criminal free, that prisoner is not a legally free man; for the law still retains its claim on him. Violence is not law, but rather an overthrowing of the law. To make a transgressor legally free, the demands of the law must be complied with. Behold here the reason why God would not use His almighty power to set us captives free — He would not set aside His own Law. He wanted our liberty, but legally, lawfully; and the Law requires a ransom. But has not a ruler the right to pardon those under sentence of the law? Our civil constitution confers this prerogative on our chief magistrate; but he is to use this authority *lawfully*, and if he pardons without cause, he abuses his authority and becomes the patron of transgressors. Man had to be redeemed according to law, with judgment and righteousness, and could not be restored by violence or connivance.” (*Kuegele*.) For this reason, then, God, in His great mercy, laid all our sins on His dear Son and made Him our ransom. Christ stood in the judgment of God for us, in our stead suffering all the penalties imposed by divine justice and thereby obtaining for us the righteousness that availeth before God. Whosoever believeth in Him shall not come into Judgment, but has passed from death unto life.

*Jesus, my great High Priest,  
Offered His blood and died;  
My guilty conscience seeks  
No sacrifice beside,  
His powerful blood did once atone,  
And now it pleads before the Throne.*

*To this dear Surety's hand  
Will I commit my cause;  
He answers and fulfils  
His Father's broken laws.  
Behold my soul at freedom set;  
My Surety paid the dreadful debt.*

## Thursday after the First Sunday in Lent

*For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.*

Hebrews 2:18.

After His baptism in Jordan our Savior was led by God's Spirit into the wilderness, there to be tempted of the devil. He did not drive the devil from Him with His almighty power, as He could have done, but suffered Satan to attack Him and overcame his assaults victoriously by means of the written Word of God. And so in all subsequent temptations He repulsed Satan, until in the night in which He was betrayed He could triumphantly declare: "*The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me.*" Yes, the prince of this world, Satan, who accuses us day and night on account of our sinfulness, came against our suffering Savior and endeavored to destroy Him and to prevent His great work of redemption. But all in vain. In His vicarious death on the cross our Savior gained the final, everlasting victory over the forces of darkness; He "descended into hell," into the very citadel of Satan, where He proclaimed our victorious redemption from the devil's power. O glorious truth! The Seed of the Woman *has* bruised the head of the Old Serpent that betrayed our first parents and *has* atoned for their and our apostasy, or falling away from God. "*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*" Now we *are* redeemed from death and hell; and though Satan assail us again and again with his temptations to misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice, we can now victoriously withstand his assaults through faith in Him who is greater and mightier than the prince of this world, even our loving, sympathizing High Priest, the dear Savior Jesus Christ. He can and will succor us if we only fly to Him. His strength is made perfect in our weakness. His saving Word is our sure weapon of defense against ten thousand devils.

*Though devils all the world should fill,  
All eager to devour us,  
We tremble not, we fear no ill,  
They shall not overpower us.  
This world's prince may still  
Scowl fierce as he will,  
He can harm us none,  
He's judged; the deed is done;  
One little word can fell him.*

*The Word they still shall let remain  
And not a thank have for it;  
He's by our side upon the plain  
With His good gifts and Spirit.  
And take they our life,  
Goods, fame, child, and wife:  
Let these all be gone,  
They yet have nothing won;  
The Kingdom ours remaineth.*

## Friday after the First Sunday in Lent

*And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on Me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good; but Me ye have not always. She hath done what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint My body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.*

Mark 14:6-9

Here our Lord Jesus defends timid and silent Mary of Bethany against the unjust criticism of some of His disciples. She had anointed Him with very precious ointment, at which several of His disciples, especially the traitor Judas, had taken offense, declaring it to be an unnecessary waste, as the precious ointment might have been sold for the benefit of the poor. But the Lord defends her act as an act of personal love, done in self-sacrificing devotion to Him. The ointment which Mary had used was “the costliest oil of antiquity, the pure spikenard, drawn from an Indian plant and exposed in flasks of alabaster for sale throughout the Roman Empire, where it fetched a price that put it beyond the reach of any but the very rich.” Among all present there at Bethany, Mary was the only one who had grasped in personal faith the words of Jesus concerning His approaching death. Even His disciples “*understood none of those things, and they were hid from them.*” Mary, however, who had sat at Jesus’ feet, had grasped the “mystery of the Cross” revealed by His blessed lips; and so it was above all an act of faith when she anointed her Lord. Hence her memory shall not perish as long as the Gospel is preached in the world, Her act of loving and devoted faith shall be held up to all men as an example for them to follow. Let us not forget it. We no longer have the Savior visibly with us, but we can serve Him in His poor, suffering brethren; and here we are not to be stingy, but, like Mary, to give the best we have and can give. Above all, let us sit at His feet in this holy time of Lent and deepen our faith and love through the story of His saving Passion and death.

*Jesus, I will ponder now  
on Thy holy Passion;  
with Thy Spirit me endow  
for such meditation.  
Grant that I in love and faith  
may the image cherish  
of Thy suffering, pain, and death  
that I might not perish.*

*Grant that I Thy Passion view  
with repentant grieving  
nor Thee crucify anew  
by unholy living.  
How could I refuse to shun  
every sinful pleasure  
since for me God’s only Son  
suffered without measure?*

## Saturday after the First Sunday in Lent

*Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands and that He was come from God and went to God, He riseth from supper and laid aside His garments and took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.*

John 13:3–5

It was in the guest-chamber at Jerusalem, where He was eating the last Passover-meal with His disciples, that Jesus performed this lowest and meanest service of a slave — washing the feet of His followers. Ah, He was soon to humble Himself even deeper before their eyes and die as a condemned slave and criminal on the cross that He might wash them and all men clean from the damning stain of sin and guilt. Oh, how our blessed Lord puts to shame our pride and self-esteem with this act of lowly service! He tells His disciples and us why He performed it. After He had washed their feet, He said to His disciples: “*Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.*” Oh, how little we follow this example of our Lord! May He forgive us our many acts of unkindness and through His Holy Spirit teach us to crucify our Old Adam of selfishness and pride and to serve each other more in love!

*O blessed Jesus, when I see Thee bending,  
girt as a servant, at Thy servants' feet,  
love, lowliness, and might, in zeal all blending  
to wash their dust away and make them meet  
to share Thy feast, I know not to adore  
whether Thy humbleness or glory more.*

*Meek Jesus, to my soul Thy Spirit lending,  
teach me to live like Thee in lowly love;  
with humblest service all Thy saints befriending  
until I serve before Thy throne above, —  
yes, serving e'en my foes, as Thou didst seek  
the feet of Judas in Thy service meek.*

*Daily my pilgrim feet, as homeward wending  
my weary way, are sadly stained with sin;  
daily do Thou, Thy precious grace expending,  
wash me all clean without and clean within  
and make me fit to have a part with Thee  
and Thine at last in heaven's festivity.*



## The Second Sunday in Lent

*What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.*

John 13:7

Peter could not understand why the Lord wanted to wash His disciples' feet. It passed his comprehension. So he burst out with the protest: "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" But the Lord answers him with the words: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." And the Lord did explain the reason for His incomprehensible action afterwards, and Peter learned a lesson he never forgot in his life. How often does the Lord do things in our lives that we cannot understand! His providences with us are often riddles we cannot solve. Often they touch our very heartstrings and fill our eyes with tears and our lips with wailing anguish. Who can understand why his dear ones are taken from him by death, often in the very prime of life? Who can understand why the Lord lays him low on a couch of pain and sickness when he would like to do so much good to his family and friends? Who can understand "planes crashes, railroad wrecks, the ravages of war, and all the cruelties, and oppressions, and persecutions, and wrongs of every kind which give a lurid light to all history, so that it is hard to believe in the perfect goodness of God!'"? But is there not comfort, great divine comfort, in the fact that all these incomprehensible dispensations come from Him who loved us unto death and that they can never mean our harm, but are sent only for our temporal and eternal happiness? Though far above our sight, they are always done in love by Him who has numbered the very hairs of our head and says: "Thou shalt know hereafter." Blessed "hereafter"! Let us patiently and prayerfully wait for it.

*Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy and shall break  
In blessings on your head.*

*Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His grace;  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.*

*His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.*

*Blind unbelief is sure to err  
And scan His work in vain;  
God is His own Interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.*

## Monday after the Second Sunday in Lent

*And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body, which is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you.*

Luke 22:19–20

While eating the Passover-meal with His disciples, the Savior takes of the bread and wine and, blessing them, gives them to His disciples with the plain words: “*This is My body; this is My blood. This do in remembrance of Me.*” He calls it the new testament. So the old testament, or covenant, with its types and symbols and burdensome rites and laws, is abolished. We are now living in the times of the New Testament, in which we have Christ Himself and all the rich treasures of His saving grace which He won for us in His vicarious sufferings and death. Mistaken minds have altered the words of His testament, some calling it a mere symbol, in which we receive nothing but bread and wine. Others declare that their priests can change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ and thus offer up Christ anew for the sins of the living and the dead. But that is a blasphemous abuse of the Lord’s testament; for Scripture expressly declares, Hebrews 9:12, “*By His own blood He entered in **once** into the Holy Place, having obtained **eternal** redemption for us.*” Relying on Christ’s sacred Word, we believe that we receive with the bread that we *eat* and the wine that we *drink* in the Lord’s Supper His body and blood in an inexplicable, heavenly manner. Only then do we receive this Holy Supper worthily when we humbly believe the plain words of Christ and come to the Sacrament “*in remembrance*” of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why we should remember the Lord’s death Luther tells us in his *Christian Questions*, saying: “That we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins but Christ, true God and man; and that we may learn to look with terror at our sins and to regard them as great indeed and to find joy and comfort in Him alone, and thus be saved through such faith.” And why I should wish to go to the Sacrament, Luther again tells us so touchingly: “That I may learn to believe that Christ died for my sin out of great love, as before said, and that I may also learn of Him to love God and my neighbor.” —When did we partake of the Lord’s Supper last?

Lord Jesus, make us worthy guests  
at Thy table of grace. Amen.

## Tuesday after the Second Sunday in Lent

*And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*

Luke 22:31–32

What a kind and gracious Savior the Lord here shows Himself to Simon Peter! He warns His weak and impulsive disciple against Satan's coming temptation. He sees how helpless Peter, through his own fault, will prove under the temptation, but He does not for that reason cast him aside. Though Peter prove faithless to Him, He in His great mercy will prove faithful to the fallen sinner and bring him back to His fold. He therefore tells Peter: "*I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.*" And it was this promise of forgiving and abiding mercy given by his Lord that saved penitent Peter, saved him from despairing as Judas did when he went out from the courtyard of the high priest to weep so bitterly over his base and sad denial of his Lord. Ever afterwards Peter faithfully confessed Him and strengthened his brethren, as we see from his glorious epistles. Peter's Savior is our Savior. He knows our fickle hearts better than we do. He would save us from falling from grace and losing the crown of everlasting life. He therefore warns us so lovingly in His holy Word against all false doctrine, all dangerous companionship with the unbelieving world, all manner of sin. But, alas! in our sinful weakness we so often give way to temptation and, like Peter, fall into grievous disobedience and sin. Oh, if our merciful Savior did not take compassion on us and intercede for us as He did for Peter, not one of us would come to saving repentance and be able to rise from his fall. It is owing to the faithful Lord and Savior alone, then, that our faith does not fail and that we can come back to Him with the plea for mercy and be heard.

*Lord, I have sinned, but pardon me  
the faults for which I grieve;  
in mercy to Thy tender arms  
thy sinning child receive.*

*The wrong that, unashamed, I did,  
may I with shame confess  
nor seek to shield myself from blame  
nor make my fault seem less.*

*Then o'er my sinful soul do Thou  
Thy precious blood outpour  
and let Thy lips forgiveness speak  
and bid me "sin no more."*

## Wednesday after the Second Sunday in Lent

*Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder. And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with Me.*

Matthew 26:36–38

*“Draw near, my heart, and gaze anew  
where Jesus on that night withdrew  
to bear the load for thee;  
come, read the love that in Him wrought,  
come, linger long in tender thought,  
in dark Gethsemane.”*

Who can forget Gethsemane, the sacred garden with its olive-trees at the foot of Mount Olivet, where our Savior in great agony of soul, knowing and dreading the awful ordeal awaiting Him, wrestled with His God and Father in prayer? Three times He falls to the ground and pleads: “*O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*” The Lord, our God, has laid on Him, His guiltless Son, the iniquity of us all. He now tastes the bitterness of death for us all; for “*the wages of sin is death,*” not only temporal death, but eternal death, where the immortal soul, forever separated from God, its Maker, dwells in the outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. He drinks the cup of God’s holy wrath to the very last dregs and for a time suffers the agony of the damned in hell. But thus He redeemed us from the pain and woe of the damned and saved us from the wrath to come. Jesus, bereft of all consolation, now becomes our Joy and Consolation through all eternity. “Gethsemane, thy name is graved deep on the hearts of all the saved and cannot be erased; for till eternity shall end, oh, who in full can comprehend the scene in thee embraced?”

*See where thy Lord in awful test  
obeyed the Father’s high behest  
submissively for thee;  
oh, think what torture He endured  
and what of bliss for thee secured  
in dark Gethsemane!*

*And when harassed by many a doubt  
and darkness gather thick about  
without a cheering ray,  
then to Gethsemane repair  
and listen to the Savior’s prayer  
and learn of Him to pray*

*But till life’s service be resigned,  
shall ever sacred be enshrined  
that scene of agony;  
let tears its clustered memories start,  
but never, O my wayward heart,  
forget Gethsemane!*

## Thursday after the Second Sunday in Lent

*And He cometh unto the disciples and findeth them asleep and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Matthew 26:40–41

Our agonizing Savior must tread the wine-press of God's wrath alone; and of the people there are none with Him, Isaiah 63:3. In great fear and dread He comes to His disciples, hoping for a word of comfort; but their lips are mute; He finds His friends asleep. We see how our salvation is founded alone on the merit of Christ. No saint with his prayer or merit can help us. But what a sad picture these sleeping disciples present! While they ought to be watching and praying with their Lord to gather strength and comfort for the rapidly approaching fatal hour when Satan would sift them as wheat, they give way to drowsiness and fall asleep. Oh, if their Lord had not watched and prayed for them, they all would have perished in the temptation that soon came upon them. But do we not see in these sleeping disciples our own portrait? Do we always go watching and praying through this life, beset, as it is, with countless temptations coming from the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh? Oh, that we might all take to heart the loving warning of our Lord: "*Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*"! Oh, that we might learn anew from our watching and praying Savior to watch more anxiously over our wayward hearts that we enter not willingly or presumptuously into any kind of temptation; and when temptation comes to us, that we may more earnestly pray: "Lead us not into temptation, but help us, Thou merciful Savior, from this evil hour!"

*Rise, my soul, to watch and pray,  
from thy sleep awake thee,  
lest at last the evil day  
suddenly o'ertake thee;  
for the Foe, well we know,  
oft his harvest reapeth  
while the Christian sleepeth.*

*But first rouse thee and awake  
from secure indiff'rence;  
else will follow in its wake  
woe without deliv'rance.  
O beware! Soul, take care!  
Death in sins might find thee  
ere thou look behind thee.*

*But while watching, also see  
that thou pray unceasing,  
for the Lord must make thee free,  
strength and faith increasing  
so to do service true.  
Let not sloth enslave thee;  
Pray, and He will save thee*

## Friday after the Second Sunday in Lent

*And while He yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the Twelve, came, and with him a great multitude, with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now, he that betrayed Him gave them a sign, saying. Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He; hold Him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus and said, Hail, Master! and kissed Him. And Jesus said to him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.*

Matthew 26:47–50.

Every incident connected with our Lord's Passion stands foretold in Old Testament prophecy. This is true also of His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver. (See Zechariah 11:12–13.) But our hearts sink with horror when we see that one of the Twelve, one of the chosen and highly favored apostles, Judas, betrays his pure and holy Master for the purchasing-price of a slave, betrays Him into the hands of His enemies by the sign and seal of friendship — a kiss! Oh, to what appalling depths of iniquity human nature can fall! What turned Judas into such a heartless hypocrite and betrayer of his Master? *It was the love of money.* Little by little his desire for gain grew upon him until it won its fatal mastery over him. So it is with every pet sin a person indulges. Little by little it twines its deadly coils about him until it crushes him in its cruel embrace, like a poisonous, monstrous snake. We know the terrible end of Judas, how he died, in frightful remorse, at his own hands. This is written for our warning. And yet the root of all evil, the sinful love of money, is the dominant vice in Christendom. How many, alas, indulge it under the plea of thrift, economy, laying up a penny for a rainy day, and so forth! Meanwhile the love of money drives from their hearts all love of God and man; all pleadings and warnings of their Savior are in vain, and they finally perish in despair, as did Judas. Let us beseech our Lord to shield us by His Holy Spirit from Judas' vile sin and terrible doom.

*O meek Redeemer, dost Thou move  
to meet the traitor and reprove  
that execrable kiss?  
Yielding Thyself for sinful man,  
whose life on earth is but a span,  
was ever love like this?*

*Alas for me! the guilt is mine  
whene'er against Thy will benign  
my treacherous heart hath stood;  
mine are the lips that have betrayed,  
mine is the debt which must be paid  
with groans and tears and blood.*

## Saturday after the Second Sunday in Lent

*Then asked He them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am He; if, therefore, ye seek Me, let these go their way; that the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none.*

John 18:7-9

Though invincible angel legions stood ready to prevent His capture and arrest, our suffering Lord would not call them to His rescue. Neither would He be defended by the sword. "Put up again thy sword into his place," He said to Simon Peter; "for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." He and His saving cause win their way to victory, not by carnal weapons, but alone by the message of His redeeming love, proclaimed in His soul-converting Gospel. He is come to save the world through His atoning sacrifice on the cross. Willingly He therefore now gives Himself into the hands of His captors. But the divine power, which He would not use for His own defense, He now employs for the safe-conduct of His weak and fearing disciples. "If ye seek Me, let these go their way," He commands, and with this word of divine power compels His captors to let His disciples escape unharmed. What a mighty Savior we have in our dear Lord Jesus Christ! If He could thus save His followers while He was in the humble form of a servant here on earth, how much more will He be able to save them now while sitting at the right hand of God, clothed with everlasting majesty and glory! How mightily has He not defended and saved His little flock of believers, His Church, through all the stormy centuries! How wonderfully did He not protect and guard Luther and His other Gospel witnesses during the Reformation against all the wiles and persecutions of Popes and emperors! So is He still today able to save to the uttermost all that come to God through Him. Let us give ourselves and the cause of His Gospel confidently into His omnipotent hands. We have His glorious promise: "My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand," John 10:28.

*Jesus, priceless Treasure,  
Source of purest pleasure,  
truest Friend to me!  
Long my heart hath panted  
till it well-nigh fainted,  
thirsting after Thee!  
Thine I am, O spotless Lamb!  
I will suffer naught to hide Thee,  
ask for naught beside Thee.*

*In Thine arm I rest me;  
foes who would molest me  
cannot reach me here.  
Though the earth be shaking,  
every heart be quaking,  
Jesus calms my fear.  
Sin and hell in conflict fell  
with their heaviest storms assail me;  
Jesus will not fail me.*

## The Third Sunday in Lent

*And the high priest answered and said unto Him, I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

Matthew 26:63–64

The captors of Jesus first led Him bound to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest of that year, who had been plotting the Savior's death ever since the resurrection of Lazarus, John 11:49–50. Before this biased and cruel judge our Lord is brought from Annas, where His trial at once takes place. When, however, our Lord remains silent to all the lying testimony which the hastily collected, false, and suborned witnesses adduce against Him, Caiaphas springs his trap and solemnly adjures the Lord to tell them whether He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, or not. Now, where the honor of His heavenly Father, the truth of His Gospel, the salvation of the lost sinful world, is involved, our blessed Lord does not hesitate a moment, but at once confesses the truth, though He knows what terrible sufferings and death await Him. In His great love He would even save His cruel, unjust judges, and therefore He warns them against the coming judgment.. He came in judgment on them in the destruction of their city, Jerusalem; He will come to their final and eternal Judgment when He appears in the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and the dead. Woe then unto all who rejected Him, their only Savior, in blind and obdurate hate and unbelief! He that believeth not shall be damned; he excludes himself from the mercy, the righteousness, the salvation, prepared also for him in Christ Jesus, the sinners' Friend and pardoning Judge; and so he must suffer the curse and die in his sins without mercy through all eternity. "*Kiss the Son lest He be angry and ye perish from the way when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him*" (Psalm 2:12).

*Great God, to Thee my spirit clings,  
Thy boundless love declaring;  
one wondrous sight me comfort brings,  
the Judge my nature wearing.  
Beneath His cross I view the day  
when heaven and earth shall pass away  
and thus prepare to meet Him.*



## Monday after the Third Sunday in Lent

*And after a while came unto him they that stood by and said to Peter, Surely thou art also one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.*

Matthew 26:73–74

Though not premeditated, like Judas' betrayal, Peter's base and cowardly denial of our Lord is in no way excusable. What business has he there in the courtyard of the high priest, among the sneering and mocking enemies of his Master? And had he not been warned faithfully and repeatedly against the very sin he was now committing? Why had he not hearkened to, and obeyed, his faithful Master's caution to watch and pray against this temptation? But it is ever thus: Pride goeth before a fall. In his pride, Peter would not acknowledge that he could ever deny his Master. He trusted in himself, in his good intentions, in his deceitful and wicked heart, and terribly came to grief. For a lying and deceitful tongue is ever an abomination to the holy and truthful God, and our Savior declares: "*Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.*" Alas! there are very few of the Lord's followers who have never denied Him, be it only by being conformed to the unbelieving world or by having kept silent when they ought to have confessed their faith. We can find pardon for this grievous sin only in the cleansing blood of Jesus. But the only safe course to follow against future lapses is to stay away from all dangerous resorts of the wicked world, from all wicked places of entertainment. Let us zealously avoid all intimate association with the unbelieving enemies of our Lord and do according to His word: "*Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty,*" II Corinthians 6:17–18.

*My soul, be on thy guard!  
Ten thousand foes arise,  
and hosts of sin are pressing hard  
to draw thee from the skies.*

*O watch and fight and pray!  
The battle ne'er give o'er;  
renew it boldly every day  
and help divine implore.*

*Ne'er think the victory won  
nor lay thine armor down;  
thine arduous work will not be done  
till thou receive the crown.*

*Fight on, my soul, till death  
shall bring thee to thy God!  
He'll take thee at thy parting breath  
to His divine abode.*

## Tuesday after the Third Sunday in Lent

*And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly.*

Luke 22:61–62

“Peter, is it true? Thou dost not know Me, Me, with whom thou hast been for three long years, seeing My mighty works and hearing My saving Gospel; Me, of whom thou didst confess in the fulness of thy grateful heart: ‘*Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God*’ What, O Peter, if it were true? If thou didst not know Me and I did not know thee, but should deny thee before My heavenly Father, even as thou hast now denied Me?” All this and much more lay in the look of reproachful love which our bound and captive Master gave His denying disciple. But it was also a look of pitying and merciful love that He gave him when He turned to look on Peter. “O Peter,” that look declared, “did I not warn thee? But thou wouldst not listen. Thou hast denied Me, but I will not deny thee. My silence now atones for thy wicked denial and blasphemy. I now go to suffer and die for thy great sin and to save thee from its damning guilt and punishment. I will forgive and forget. Come back to Me. I will not cast thee out.” It was this love, this ever-adorable love of His pitying and forgiving Master, that brought Simon Peter to his senses, made him remember his Savior’s warning, and caused his penitent tears to flow. In faith he lays hold of his Savior’s pardon, and that saves him from despair in his bitter repentance. But ever afterward, it is said, when Peter heard a crowing cock, the tears would start to his eyes, and he would remember his great sin. His repentance was lifelong, and that is the only true repentance. If we have sinned with Peter, let us repent with him. “*Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord, thy God,*” Jeremiah 3:12

*Out of the deep I call*

*to Thee, O Lord, to Thee.*

*Before Thy throne of grace I fall;*

*be merciful to me!*

*Lord, there is mercy now,*

*as ever was, with Thee.*

*Before Thy throne of grace I bow;*

*be merciful to me!*

## Wednesday after the Third Sunday in Lent

*Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard His blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in His face and buffeted Him, and others smote Him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, Thou Christ, Who is he that smote Thee?*

Matthew 26:65–68

Pretending profound horror at the supposed blasphemy of Christ, the cowardly high priest and elders of the Jews vented their long-harbored hate and spite against their helpless Prisoner by inflicting all manner of brutal indignities upon Him. We wonder that the earth did not open its mouth and swallow these mockers and blasphemers of God's holy Son, Numbers 16. But this was their hour and the power of darkness, and all was done that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. Do we not hear and see the lament of Isaiah (53:3) fulfilled before our very eyes: "*He is despised and rejected of men. a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not;*" and (Is.50:6) "*I hid not My face from shame and spitting*"? But what these wicked maligners of our blessed Lord intended for evil God in His wonderful mercy meant unto good to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Jesus should die for the nation of the Jews, and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad, John 11:52. It is not a mere man whom the Jewish council here condemns to death, but God's own Son, made manifest in the flesh. Therefore Paul can exult: "*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,*" II Corinthians 5:19. Ever since, we can exult with him: "*If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?*" Romans 8:31–32. Whoever now believes in this despised and condemned Jesus shall not come into condemnation, but *has passed from death unto life*, John 5:24.

*Thou, ah! Thou, hast taken on Thee  
bonds and stripes, a cruel rod.  
Pain and scorn were heaped upon Thee,  
O Thou sinless Son of God!  
Thus didst Thou my soul deliver  
from the bonds of sin forever.  
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,  
dearest Jesus, unto Thee!*

## Thursday after the Third Sunday in Lent

*Pilate said unto Him, Art Thou a king, then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice. Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth?*

John 18:37–38

Because the high priest and the elders of the Jews no longer held the power to execute a condemned prisoner, they dragged our Lord in the early dawn of Good Friday morning before the judgment-hall and demanded of the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, that he put the hated Jesus to death. Asked for the reason, they falsely accused the Savior of having forbidden to give tribute to Caesar and of setting Himself up as a king. Questioned by Pilate about the charge, the Lord told His heathen judge that He was truly a king, not, however, a king of this world, but the God-ordained King of Truth, the truth that saves men's souls. But what does Pilate answer? He sneeringly asks the question ever asked by all confirmed skeptics and infidels, "*What is truth?*" These agnostics act as if they could not know the truth. And yet it is proclaimed from the housetops in these glad, rich Gospel days. Listen, ye doubters: "*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus,*" the incarnate Son of God, *came into the world to save sinners*" to save you. Listen again: "*If any man will do His will*" — namely, repent of his sins and believe in Christ as his Savior, Acts 17:30–31— "*he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God,*" John 7:17. Who has never eaten honey knows nothing of its sweetness. Who will not do the will of God and believe in His Son, in Jesus Christ, will never know and experience the surpassing sweetness of Christ's saving truth in his heart or in his life or on his death-bed. Poor doubters!

*O Jesus, King of Glory,  
both David's Lord and Son,  
Thy realm endures forever;  
in heaven is fixed Thy throne.  
Help that in earth's dominions,  
throughout from pole to pole,  
Thy realm may spread salvation  
to each benighted soul.*

*Ah, look on me with pity  
though I am weak and poor.  
Admit me to Thy kingdom,  
to dwell there, blest and sure.  
I pray Thee, keep and guide me  
safe from my bitter foes,  
from sin and death and Satan;  
free me from all my woes.*

## Friday after the Third Sunday in Lent

*And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad; for he was desirous to see Him of a long season because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned with Him in many words; but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. And Herod with his men of war set Him at naught, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate.*

Luke 23:8–11

Pilate had found Jesus innocent and somehow became deeply impressed by the mysterious personality of the prisoner before him. He tried to shift the responsibility in the matter to others, and hearing that Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Him under a strong guard to King Herod, who had come down from Galilee for the Passover at Jerusalem. This wicked king had been given the jurisdiction over Galilee by the Romans. He was a lewd adulterer and the wanton murderer of John the Baptist, as we read in Matthew 14. He was glad when Jesus was brought before him; for he held our blessed Lord to be nothing else than a cunning magician who had won great renown by his mastery in the black art. Our Lord, however, performs no miracle before him, nor does He answer any of the wicked king's many questions; and so by His own example He upholds the rule laid down for us in Matthew 7:6 "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you." This wretched king and his men of war, exasperated at the dignified silence of the Lord, vent their spite against Him by mocking and taunting Him and finally dress Him in a gorgeous robe, the royal garb of the Jewish kings, and send Him back to Pilate. So our weary and mistreated Savior is dragged without mercy from one unjust tribunal to the other, first before Annas, then Caiaphas, then Pilate, then Herod, and now back again to Pilate. But the robe of mockery He now wears is significant. We see in it an emblem of the white robe of divine righteousness which He has won for us sinners by His patient, vicarious sufferings and death.

*Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness  
my beauty are, my glorious dress.  
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,  
with joy shall I lift up my head.*

*When from the dust of death I rise  
to claim my mansion in the skies,  
e'en then this shall be all my plea:  
Jesus hath lived and died for me.*

## Saturday after the Third Sunday in Lent

*And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this Man and release unto us Barabbas! (who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison).*

Luke 23:18–19

Pilate tries in vain to get rid of the matter with Christ. The Scriptures have to be fulfilled. Christ, the Savior, comes into the life of every man, who must now decide for or against Him and thus reveal the secret thoughts of his heart, Luke 2: 34-35. After Herod's refusal to decide the case with Christ, Pilate hits upon another scheme. Recalling the custom of releasing a prisoner at the Passover Feast, he asks the Jews whether he should release the notorious criminal, Barabbas, to them or the innocent Christ. But they all with one accord demand the release of Barabbas and reject Christ. What shameful ingratitude! For as Pilate rightly asks them, "*What evil hath He*" —Christ— "*done?*" But behind these blind and infuriate Jews stands our God with His wonderful plan for our redemption. In His eyes Barabbas represents rebellious mankind, which has deserved prison and death for its sedition against Him and His holy Law. But in guilty mankind's stead, Jesus, His innocent Son, is condemned, and Barabbas is set free. Let us imagine ourselves in prison in the place of Barabbas, loaded with guilt and dreading to be led forth to our execution in the coming dawn. Then let us read the impressive lines of Hezekiah Butterworth:

*Barabbas in his prison cell  
gazed on the heavens fair  
and saw the paschal moon ascend  
in night's empurpled air.  
The hours crept on; with awe and dread  
he waited for the morn;  
he heard at last the soldier's tread  
And saw the bolt withdrawn.  
"Barabbas," so the soldier spake,  
"I bring thee news of grace;  
for Christ, the Man of Nazareth,  
today shall take thy place.  
Without the gate shall Jesus bear  
the cross prepared for thee;  
go thou to the atoning feast!"  
The man of crime went free.  
Barabbas saw the darkened earth  
when came the hour of noon  
and slept in peace when Jesus wept  
beneath the paschal moon.  
O man of sin, in thee I see  
myself redeemed by grace.  
The blood-stained cross that rose for thee  
took every sinner's place.*

## The Fourth Sunday in Lent

*Then Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head; and they put on Him a purple robe and said, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote Him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again and saith unto them, Behold, I bring Him forth to you that ye may know that I find no fault in Him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man!*

John 19:1–5

*O bleeding Head, and wounded,  
and full of pain and scorn,  
in mockery surrounded  
with cruel crown of thorn!*

*O Head, once crowned with glory  
and heavenly majesty,  
but now despised and gory;  
yet here I welcome Thee!*

*Men spit upon and jeer Thee,  
Thou noble countenance,  
though mighty worlds shall fear Thee  
and flee before Thy glance.  
How art Thou pale with anguish,  
with sore abuse and scorn!  
How doth Thy visage languish,  
which once was bright as morn!*

*Now from Thy cheeks has vanished  
their color, once so fair;  
from Thy red lips is banished  
the splendor that was there.  
Pale death with cruel rigor  
bereaveth Thee of life;  
thus lovest Thou Thy vigor  
and strength in this sad strife.*

*My burden in Thy Passion,  
Lord, Thou hast borne for me,  
for it was my transgression  
which brought this woe on Thee.*

*I cast me down before Thee;  
wrath were my rightful lot.  
Have mercy, I implore Thee;  
Redeemer, spurn me not.*

*My Shepherd, now receive me!  
My Guardian, own me Thine!  
Great blessings Thou didst give me,  
O Source of gifts divine!  
Thy lips have often fed me  
with milk and sweetest food;  
Thy Spirit oft has led me  
to stores of heavenly good.*

*Here I will stand beside Thee;  
from Thee I will not part.  
O Savior, do not chide me!  
When breaks Thy loving heart,  
when soul and body languish  
in death's last fatal grasp,  
then, in Thy deepest anguish,  
Thee in my arms I'll clasp.*

## Monday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent

*Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do, then, with Jesus, which is called Christ?*

Matthew 27:22

Pilate does not know what to do with Jesus, his prisoner. He ought to have known, and in his inmost heart he did know. The path of duty lay plain and clear before him. He knew that Jesus was innocent, that the Jews had delivered Him into his hands and demanded Jesus' death from envy. Matt 27: 18 So it was his sacred duty to set Jesus free. But Pilate was a politician, who curried favor with the elders of the Jews and was afraid to anger them by releasing Jesus; he finally gives way to their insistent clamor and sentences Jesus to be crucified and so commits judicial murder. — "*What shall I do with Jesus?*" Alas! so many raise that question of Pilate in our time. So many do not know what to do with Jesus. Many, even so-called ministers of the Gospel, who ought to know better, hold Him to be a mere man, a great teacher of human love and social reform, who died a martyr's death on the cross. But they contradict themselves. They all regard Him as a good and pious man, in fact, as the highest type of human goodness and morality. But no good, moral man will die with a lie, even a false oath, on his lips. Jesus, put under oath by the high priest, Caiaphas, declares that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. What will these unbelieving critics do with this sacred oath of Christ concerning Himself? God in His holy Word tells all men what they should do with Christ. He has made Christ our Wisdom, from whom we should learn divine, saving truth; our Righteousness, in whom alone we can find forgiveness for our sins; our Sanctification, in whom alone we can stand holy and blameless in the sight of God; our Redemption, in whom alone we find salvation from death and the wrath to come and gain eternal life, I Corinthians 1:30. Only if we by faith make Christ all this to us, is He in fact our Savior.

*In the cross of Christ I glory,  
towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
all the light of sacred story  
gathers round its head sublime.*

*When the woes of life o'ertake me,  
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,  
never shall the cross forsake me.  
Lo! It glows with peace and joy.*

*When the Sun of Bliss is beaming  
light and love upon my way,  
from the cross the radiance streaming  
adds new luster to the day.*



## Tuesday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent

*When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it. Then answered all the people and said, His blood be on us and on our children.*

Matthew 27:24–25

In vain Pilate goes through the farce of washing his hands clean from the murder of the innocent Jesus. All the water in the ocean cannot wash the bloody guilt from his hands or his soul. God avenges the blood of His innocent Son on the cowardly and guilty judge. Tradition says that a few years later Pilate is deposed from office and cited to Rome to give an account of his many illegal acts while governor of Palestine. In his guilty fear he plunges into his own sword and dies by his own hands. And to this day there rests on the Jews the awful curse which their fathers brought down on themselves and on their posterity when they cried in their blind hate: “*His [Christ’s] blood be on us and on our children!*” But let us never forget that the blood of Christ which they spilled speaketh better things than Abel’s blood. Abel’s blood cried to God for vengeance; Christ’s innocent and divine blood pleads for mercy also for His murderers and enemies. Then let us also pray for the conversion of the Jews and support our Gospel-mission among them. The apostles were Jews, and many a gifted teacher of Christ’s saving truth has come to the Church from this despised and hated race. But above all let us make the blood of Christ, the Son of God, our only hope in life and death in sincere, humble, and grateful faith. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, Ephesians 1:7. By His blood we are redeemed from “*the pit wherein is no water,*” Zechariah 9:11, and gain admittance among heaven’s singing hosts. For they that are before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple “*have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,*” Revelation 7:14.

*Glory be to Jesus,  
who in bitter pains  
poured for me the life-blood  
from His sacred veins!*

*Grace and life eternal  
in that blood I find;  
blest be His compassion,  
infinitely kind!*

*Blest through endless ages  
be the precious stream  
which from endless torments  
did the world redeem!*

*Abel’s blood for vengeance  
pleaded to the skies;  
but the blood of Jesus  
for our pardon cries.*

## Wednesday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent

*Then delivered he [Pilate] Him unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led Him away. And He, bearing His cross, went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha.*

John 19:16–17

*“Let us also go that we may die with Him,”* Thomas exclaimed when his Master turned His face toward Jerusalem there to suffer and die. *“Let us also go that we may die with Him.”* Must we not make these words of Thomas ours as we see our bleeding, suffering Lord going forth to His death, bearing His cross? Do not our hearts melt with sorrowing love and gratitude at the touching sight? He bears His cross, bears it willingly, uncomplainingly, in loving obedience to His heavenly Father’s will, bears with it all sin and guilt, the sin and guilt of all the sons of Adam. *“Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth,* Isaiah 53:7.

*I see my Lord, the Pure, the Meek, the Lowly,  
along the mournful way in sadness tread;  
the thorns are on His brow, and He, the Holy,  
bearing His cross, to Calvary is led.*

*Silent He moveth on, all uncomplaining,  
though wearily His grief and burden press;  
and foes — nor shame nor pity now restraining —  
with scoff and jeering mock His deep distress.*

*‘Tis hell’s dark hour; yet calm Himself resigning,  
e’en as a lamb that goeth to be slain,  
the wine-press lone He treadeth unrepining,  
and falling blood-drops all His raiment stain.*

*In mortal weakness ‘neath His burden sinking,  
the Son of God accepts a mortal’s aid,  
then passes on to Golgotha unshrinking,  
where love’s divinest sacrifice is made.*

*Dear Lord, what though my path be set with sorrow,  
and oft beneath some heavy cross I groan?  
My soul, weighed down, shall strength and courage borrow  
at thoughts of deeper grief which Thou hast known.*

*And I in tears will yet look up in gladness  
and hope when troubles ‘most my soul would drown;  
the mournful way which Thou didst tread in sadness  
was but Thy way to glory and Thy crown.*

## Thursday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent

*And there followed Him a great company of people and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children... For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?*

Luke 23:27–28, 31.

The pitying tears these sympathizing women weep at the sight of the stricken and condemned Jesus do them all honor, but are wept in vain. Our Savior in His great suffering is a green tree, that is, He is innocent of any crime; He has done nothing to merit death, but suffers for the guilt of others. However, if God's avenging wrath provoked by sin can kindle so fiercely against His holy and innocent Son, how much more will the fires of His wrath burn against, and consume, the dry trees, that is, the impenitent sinners, who tread under foot all the offerings of His saving grace and bring forth no fruit meet for repentance! Such a dry tree was impenitent and stiff-necked Jerusalem. The fires of divine wrath were kindling against it and would soon utterly destroy it. Forgetting His own excruciating suffering, our loving Savior warns the weeping women against the fearful fate awaiting them and their children; they should not weep for Him, but rather weep tears of repentance for themselves and their children and thus escape the wrath to come. Weeping a few sentimental tears, experiencing for the time sympathetic and sorrowful emotions while hearing or reading the story of our Savior's Passion, will bring us no true and lasting blessing. Jesus died for our sins. All His fearful sufferings were necessary to pay for our personal guilt before the just and holy God. Therefore we are to regard our sins as great indeed and to repent of them with contrite hearts and make the Savior's atoning blood our only plea for mercy at the bar of divine justice. If we do that, we shall with the help of God's Holy Spirit also bring forth fruit meet for repentance and escape the wrath to come. "*Now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.*"

*Savior, when in dust to Thee  
low we bow th' adoring knee,  
when, repentant, to the skies  
scarce we lift our weeping eyes,  
oh, by all Thy pains and woe  
suffered once for man below,  
bending from Thy throne on high,  
hear our solemn litany!*

*By Thine hour of dire despair,  
by Thine agony of prayer,  
by the cross, the nail, the thorn,  
piercing spear, and torturing scorn,  
by the gloom that veiled the skies  
o'er the dreadful Sacrifice:  
Listen to our humble cry,  
hear our solemn litany!*

## Friday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent

*And with Him they crucify two thieves, the one on His right hand and the other on His left. And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors.*

Mark 15:27–28

*Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,  
see Him dying on the tree!  
'Tis the Christ by man rejected;  
yes, my soul, 'tis He! 'tis He!  
'Tis the long-expected Prophet,  
David's Son, yet David's Lord;  
proofs I see sufficient of it:  
'Tis the true and faithful Word.*

*Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,  
was there ever grief like His?  
Friends through fear His cause disowning,  
foes insulting His distress,  
many hands were raised to wound Him;  
none would interpose to save;  
but the deepest stroke that pierced Him  
was the stroke that Justice gave.*

*Ye who think of sin but lightly  
nor suppose the evil great  
here may view its nature rightly,  
here its guilt may estimate.  
Mark the Sacrifice appointed!  
See who bears the awful load:  
'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed,  
Son of Man and Son of God.*

O my crucified Redeemer, art Thou now looking at me from the altar of Thy blood-stained cross and saying to me with Thy dying breath and paling lips: "Thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied Me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake and will not remember thy sins"? Even so! With trembling, contrite, stricken heart I must confess: "I, many times transgressing, In number far surpassing The sand upon the coast, I thus the cause have given that Thou with grief art riven And with addictions' scourging host." O Thou atoning, loving, dying Lord and Savior, draw me now to Thee according to Thy promise: "*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me,*" John 12:32. Grant me grace to embrace Thee and Thy all-sufficient sacrifice with arms of childlike faith. Nail me with Thee to Thy cross that I may ever crucify my sinful flesh and the lusts thereof and live alone unto Thee, who thus didst love me unto death, even the death upon the shameful, bitter cross.

## Saturday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent

*Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*

Luke 23:34

Who can measure the fathomless depths of the pardoning love which our crucified Redeemer reveals in this His first word on the cross? Instead of calling down God's just and terrifying wrath on His murderers, He pleads for them with His heavenly Father for mercy. Amazing pity, love unknown, and grace beyond degree! But did the Jews not know what they were doing when they crucified their Savior? No, not to the full limit; else had they not crucified the Prince of Life, Acts 3:17. But yet they were not without excuse; for they should have known, seeing that they had the prophets of old and Jesus Himself to instruct them. It is therefore wonderful, incomprehensible love and mercy that the Savior here asks God to forgive them their blood-red guilt. But was not that the purpose of His coming into the world, of His lowly life, His vicarious sufferings and death, that He might obtain forgiveness of sins for all His brethren after the flesh? Oh, how dearly it cost Him! But let us ask ourselves: Do we always know what we are doing when we commit some sin? Do we then realize and remember that it cost our Savior His unutterable agony on the cross to gain for us forgiveness for that sin and misdeed? Because He also pleads for us, God still spares us and forgives us our sins. But, oh, that the love, the wonderful love, which our crucified and pleading Savior has shown us and daily shows us, might constrain us all to avoid more zealously every thought of sin and to glorify Him daily in our body and in our spirit, which He has bought with such a price! I Corinthians 6:20.

*Jesus, the Crucified, pleads for me  
while He is nailed to the shameful tree.  
Scorned and forsaken, derided and cursed,  
see how His enemies do their worst!  
Yet, in the midst of the torture and shame,  
Jesus, the Crucified, breathes my name!  
Wonder of wonders, oh! how can it be,  
Jesus, the Crucified, pleads for me?*

*Lord, I have left Thee, I have denied,  
followed the world in my selfish pride;  
Lord, I have joined in the hateful cry:  
Slay Him, away with Him, crucify!  
Lord, I have done it, oh! ask me not how,  
woven the thorns for Thy tortured brow!  
Yet in His pity, so boundless and free,  
Jesus, the Crucified, pleads for me.*

## The Fifth Sunday in Lent

*And Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews, but that He said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.*

John 19:19–22

The Jews feel the implied scornful charge in the title which Pilate affixed to the cross of our Savior. They ask the governor to change the writing; but he curtly replies: “*What I have written I have written.*” God in heaven Himself guided Pilate’s hand when he wrote that title; and He has seen to it that the blessed message it contains has not perished from the earth. It was written in letters of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the three most important languages of the then civilized world. Hebrew was the language of the Old Testament, the language of the true religion. Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, is the Alpha and Omega of our holy religion. In Him we have the covenant of saving grace which Almighty God made with us children of sin and death. Greek was the language of science and art. All true science and art must tend to glorify Jesus, the Son of God, made manifest in the flesh. Latin was the language of the state. No state, no political commonwealth, can survive which opposes or suppresses Jesus of Nazareth and His saving Gospel. Napoleon, while in captivity on St. Helena, speaking of the Savior, declared: “Jesus Christ was more than man. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded great empires; but upon what did the creation of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire on love, and to this day millions would die for Him.” The thrones and empires of earthly kings all pass away. Jesus, the King of the Jews, the King of kings and Lord of lords, shall reign forevermore.

*O Jesus, we adore Thee  
upon the cross, our King;  
we bow our hearts before Thee,  
Thy gracious name we sing.  
That name hath brought salvation;  
that name, in life our stay,  
our peace, our consolation,  
when life shall fade away.*

*Ah, Lord, our sins arraigned Thee  
and nailed Thee to the tree;  
our pride, O Lord, disdained Thee;  
yet deign our hope to be.  
O glorious King, we bless Thee,  
no longer pass Thee by;  
O Jesus, we confess Thee  
our Lord enthroned on high.*

## Monday after the Fifth Sunday in Lent

*Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also His coat. Now, the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it whose it shall be, that the scripture might be fulfilled which saith, They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots.*

John 19: 23–24

The twenty-second Psalm, which contains so many wonderful prophecies of our Lord's Passion and death, also foretold the casting of lots for His garments. This again proves to us that no mere man died for us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, but, as foretold in Holy Scripture, a divine Savior, God's holy, incarnate Son Himself. How, then, should we ever doubt His perfect work of our redemption? In viewing the parting of His raiment here under the cross, are we not forcibly reminded of the apostle's words, II Corinthians 8:9, "*Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor that ye through His Poverty might be rich*"? We had lost the dress of holy beauty in which our God had created us. By reason of our sin we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses in the sight of God are as filthy rags. Therefore our Savior here suffers the loss of His clothes, hangs so poor and naked on the cross, that He might cover our sinful nakedness and purchase for us the garment of everlasting holiness and righteousness. The garments we now wear to cover our bodies are perpetual reminders of our sinful state. "*I counsel thee,*" says the true and faithful Witness, Revelation 3:18 "*to buy of Me white raiment that thou mayest be clothed and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.*" Whoever possesses that "*white raiment*" of his Savior can exult with Isaiah (61:10): "*I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.*"

*Lord Jesus, when we stand afar  
and gaze upon Thy holy cross,  
in love of Thee and scorn of self,  
oh, may we count the world as loss!*

*When we behold thy bleeding wounds  
and the rough way that Thou hast trod,  
make us to hate the load of sin  
that lay so heavy on our God.*

*Give us an ever-living faith  
to gaze beyond the things we see;  
and in the mystery of Thy death  
draw us and all men unto Thee.*

## Tuesday after the Fifth Sunday in Lent

*When Jesus therefore saw His mother and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.*

John 19:26–27

Roman Catholic expositors misinterpret these loving words of our dying Lord to His bereaved and broken-hearted mother. Given to the idolatrous worship of Mary and wishing to magnify her power and glory, they maintain that the Apostle John here represents all Christians, to whom the Lord now gives Mary as their mother that she might in future care for them, love them, and intercede for them! But it is very clear from our Lord's words that He does not give John into Mary's care, but Mary into the safe keeping of John. It is His mother that needs comfort and protection, now that He is severing all earthly ties which heretofore united Him with her and is going back to the glory which He had with His Father in heaven before the world began. He therefore bequeaths her as a precious legacy of love to John, who from that very hour took the mother of his Lord into his own home and provided for her to the end of her days. So our gracious Lord still provides for His Christians, especially for the lonely, the forsaken, the widows, and orphans. They are all as near and dear to Him as was Mary, His mother. He tells us so Himself when He asks, Matthew 12:48–50, "*Who is My mother, and who are My brethren?*" And stretching forth His hand toward His disciples, He, said: "*Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother.*" In our Christian widows and orphans the Lord has left us a sacred pledge of His love. Let us therefore provide for them, comfort and cheer them for His dear sake, as John did with Christ's mother, Mary.

*Thou who with dying lips  
Thy mother didst commend  
unto the tender care  
of Thy beloved friend;  
Thou who by Lazarus' grave  
in human grief didst groan,  
turn, Lord, Thine eyes on those  
left in the world alone.*

*Thou who didst call Thy Twelve  
their home and friends to leave  
and in Thy kingdom all,  
yea, more than all, receive,  
to those bereft of all  
thy pitying love extend  
and let them find in Thee  
Father and home and Friend.*



## Wednesday after the Fifth Sunday in Lent

*And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads and saying, Thou that destroyest the Temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests, mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also which were crucified with Him cast the same in His teeth.*

Matthew 27:39–44

*“But I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people. All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, ‘He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.’”* These prophetic words of the twenty-second Psalm were fulfilled to the letter in our suffering Redeemer, as may be clearly seen from our text. Not a word of comfort, of pity, does He hear in His great woe and agony; only bitter scorn and reproach. But the hooting and cursing enemies of our crucified Lord are glorifying Him and His blessed work of redemption without knowing it. *“He saved others,”* they mockingly say and thus bear witness to His glorious miracles in which He helped the poor and sick among them. *“He trusted in God,”* they jeer and thus testify to His pious life among them, to His abiding trust and confidence in God. *“He said, I am the Son of God,”* they scoff and thereby unwittingly confirm the divine honor which He claimed and which He maintained by His divine words and works among them. Ah, He could have stepped down from the cross and destroyed these blaspheming enemies with one word of His omnipotent lips, but He endured their cruel mockery patiently, silently, being obedient to His Father even unto the death of the cross. *“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

*Hail, Thou once despised Jesus!*

*Hail, Thou Galilean King!*

*Thou didst suffer to release us;*

*Thou didst free salvation bring.*

*Hail, Thou agonizing Savior,*

*Bearer of our sin and shame!*

*By Thy merits we find favor;*

*life is given through Thy name.*

*Paschal Lamb, by God appointed,*

*all our sins on Thee were laid;*

*by almighty love anointed,*

*Thou hast full atonement made.*

*All mankind has been forgiven*

*through the virtue of Thy blood;*

*opened is the gate of heaven,*

*peace is made’ twixt man and God.*

## Thursday after the Fifth Sunday in Lent

*And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise.*

Luke 23: 42–43

*“He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied; by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He hath poured out His soul unto death; and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.”* Most gloriously do we see this prophecy of Isaiah 53 fulfilled in the conversion and salvation of the dying thief. He is brought to repentance through what he hears and sees of his crucified Lord and Savior. His repentance is genuine. He rebukes the blaspheming thief on the left and confesses: *“We receive the due reward of our deeds.”* He testifies to the holiness and blamelessness of his Savior by declaring: *“This Man hath done nothing amiss.”* His faith triumphs over sin, death, and hell by humbly and trustingly praying: *“Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.”* And in His free grace and mercy the Lord accepts this criminal, who has no merit, no goodness, to boast of, and tells him: *“Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise.”* If ever, we see the solemn truth established here that we are saved by the all-sufficient merit and freely forgiving mercy of our Savior alone and by nothing else in the world. Have we made His saving merit ours by true repentance and faith, as did the dying thief? So many put off their repentance to their dying day and appeal to the example of the dying thief on the right of our Lord. But they forget the warning example of the thief on the left, who did not repent and was not saved. Today, while you hear the pleading voice of your Savior: *“Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth!”* —Today harden not your hearts, but come to Jesus! Tomorrow it may be too late!

*There is a fountain filled with blood  
drawn from Immanuel’s veins,  
and sinners plunged beneath that flood  
lose all their guilty stains.*

*The dying thief rejoiced to see  
that fountain in his day;  
and there have I, as vile as he,  
washed all my sins away.*

## Friday after the Fifth Sunday in Lent

*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

Matthew 27:46

“God by God forsaken! Who can grasp it?” Luther exclaims, overwhelmed by this soul-piercing cry of our dying Lord. We can gaze only from afar and in holy, trembling awe at this mystery of mysteries: Christ, God’s incarnate Son, forsaken for three long hours by God Himself! Who can grasp it? The sudden, terrifying gloom that overcast the earth at full midday, when the very sun seemed blotted out from the heavens, was a reflection of the fearsome and impenetrable darkness that now filled our dying Savior’s soul. His heavenly Father, the central Sun of His life, now hid His gracious face from Him. He now beheld nothing but the forbidding countenance of the angry, avenging, holy Judge. God had now become cruel to Him (Job 30:21), made Him to be sin for us, and suffered Him to expiate the very last and extremest penalty of sin — separation from God, the divine Source of all life and happiness. He now dwells in that outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, where the terrors of the damned consist in this very thing, that they are forever forsaken by God. O wonderful, O adorable Savior! Though God in His just anger, on account of our sin imputed to His Son, forsakes Him, Jesus does not forsake God but clings to Him with the trustful cry “My God!” In His agony our sin was judged, condemned, sentenced, and expiated. Because He bore the penalty of our guilt and thus satisfied divine justice, His Father was propitiated and was enabled to reconcile the world of vile sinners unto Himself. By confidence in His merits alone, we have for ourselves what He earned for us: “*Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:1). Whoever trusts in Him will never be entirely forsaken by God, but can and should always fly to Him in his bitterest grief, with this trustful prayer in his heart and on his lips —

*O God, forsake me not,  
but lead, full of compassion,  
with loving hands Thy child  
that I might gain salvation  
when here my course is run.  
Be Thou my Light, my Lot,  
my Staff, my Rock, my Shield;  
O God, forsake me not!*

*O God, forsake me not!  
Take not Thy Spirit from me,  
and suffer not the might  
of sin to overcome me.  
Increase my feeble faith,  
which Thou Thyself hast wrought;  
be Thou my Strength and Power,  
O God, forsake me not!*

## Saturday after the Fifth Sunday in Lent

*I thirst.*

John 19:28

“They gave Me also gall for My meat, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.” This prophecy of Psalm 69 was fulfilled; for when our dying Lord cried out in His great thirst, we are told in the Passion history that there was set a vessel full of vinegar near the cross, and they filled a sponge with vinegar and put it upon hyssop and put it to His mouth. “*I thirst!*” Oh, what intense suffering these two little words disclose on many a sick and death-bed! But how much more pitiful they sound on the parching lips of our Lord, consumed as He was by His long, long sufferings of body and soul! “*I thirst!*” So He cries out whose lips invited so kindly: “*If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink,*” John 7: 37. How His burning thirst ought to cut us to the quick when we consider that He suffers it for our sakes! In vain does the rich man in hell plead for a drop of water to cool his parching tongue. That would have been our fate but for this our thirsting and atoning Savior. When He said to the woman of Samaria at Jacob’s Well (John 4:7), “*Give Me to drink,*” He thirsted, above all, for her poor, perishing soul. He said to her: “*Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*” That longing fills His heart today while He is sitting on His throne of glory, as it did in the days of His flesh and there on the cross. He is come to seek and to save that which was lost. He thirsts after us that we may thirst after Him. Let us not deny His loving plea. Let us go to Him in humble, penitent faith, and He will fulfill His gracious promise also in us: “*He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst*” (John 6:35).

*Alas! and did my Savior bleed,  
and did my Sov’ reign die?  
Would He devote that sacred head  
for such a worm as I?*

*Was it for crimes that I had done  
He groaned upon the tree?  
Amazing pity, grace unknown,  
and love beyond degree!*

*Well might the sun in darkness hide  
and shut his glories in,  
when God, the mighty Maker, died  
for man the creature’s sin!*

*Thus might I hide my blushing face  
while His dear cross appears,  
dissolve my heart in thankfulness,  
and melt my eyes in tears.*

*But drops of grief can ne’er repay  
the debt of love I owe.  
Here, Lord, I give myself away;  
‘tis all that I can do.*

## Palm Sunday — The Sixth Sunday in Lent

*It is finished.*

John 19:30

No greater shout of triumph ever rose to the listening skies than this victory-announcing cry of our expiring Lord. Though bleeding from innumerable wounds and exhausted unto death from the raging conflict, the mighty Captain of our salvation has routed the enemy and forever redeemed our immortal souls from the bondage of sin and death and hell. He now rejoices and exults that peace is again established between God and man, that the fiery wrath of God is quenched, His exacting Law fulfilled, forgiveness of sins secured, the lost paradise regained, and the kingdom of God, the kingdom of righteousness, of joy and peace in the Holy Ghost, founded on earth. No greater word—for it is only one word in the original language—was ever uttered in heaven or on earth, since no greater deed was ever accomplished by God or man. It fills heaven with joy, earth with salvation, hell with fear and despair. It is the joyous shout of our victorious King, the Lord mighty in battle. It is the exulting cry of our merciful High Priest, who can now enter into the Holy of Holies with His sacrificial blood and obtain eternal redemption for all mankind. It is the glorious announcement of our Divine Prophet, whose messengers can now go out into all the world with the sweet invitation: “Come; for all things are now ready!” “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; ...[therefore] be ye reconciled to God.” Through all eternity will this blessed cry of victory resound before the throne of the Lamb, where saved sinners from every tribe and nation will sing: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessings,” Revelation 5:12. With what joy we ought to hear it and make it the rock of our salvation! For it alone can defend us against the roaring waves of sin and give joy and peace to our guilty conscience.

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
let me hide myself in Thee;  
let the water and the blood  
from Thy riven side which flowed  
be of sin the double cure,  
cleanse me from its guilt and power.*

*Not the labors of my hands  
can fulfil Thy Law's demands;  
could my zeal no respite know,  
could my tears forever flow,  
all for sin could not atone;  
Thou must save, and Thou alone.*

## Monday of Holy Week

*And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit; and having said thus, He gave up the ghost.*

Luke 28:46

With a loud voice our Savior bows His thorn-crowned head and dies upon the cross. But dying for Him is not compulsory. He does not die because He has to die, but because He wants to die. His death is a free act of His great love, as He declares, John 10:18, “*No man taketh My life from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.*” He does not think of His poor, wound-torn body. Of that He knows what is written in Psalm 16:9–10, “*Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory rejoiceth; My flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not ...suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.*” But His soul He commends into the hands of His heavenly Father, to whose Paradise of fullness of joy and pleasures He is about to depart, as He Himself prophesied to the repentant thief (Luke 23:43), and at whose omnipotent right hand He shall soon sit and live and reign through all eternity. In His death He secures for us the victory over death; for He goes into death to abolish death and to bring life and immortality to light. Now we can look up to Him in our last hour and pray with David: “*Into Thy hand I commit my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth,*” Psalm 31:5. So John Huss prayed while being burned at the stake; and Luther made it his dying prayer; and countless believing souls of all ranks and conditions in life have fallen peacefully asleep with these trustful words on their dying lips. Let us also commend our souls into the hands of Him who loved the world in Christ Jesus and gave Him to be the ransom for our sins and our entrance into the mansions of heaven. For then we too can make this victorious prayer of the Savior our very own in the hour of death, confident of our destination for Jesus’ sake..

*Thanks from my heart I offer  
Thee, Jesus, dearest Friend,  
for all that Thou didst suffer;  
my good didst Thou intend.  
Ah! grant that I may ever  
to Thy truth faithful be;  
when soul and body sever,  
may I be found in Thee!*

*When hence I must betake me,  
Lord, do not Thou depart!  
O nevermore forsake me  
when death is at my heart!  
When soul and body languish,  
O leave me not alone,  
but take away mine anguish  
by virtue of Thine own!*

*Be Thou my Consolation  
and Shield when I must die;  
remind me of Thy Passion  
when my last hour draws nigh.  
Mine eyes shall then behold Thee,  
upon Thy cross shall dwell,  
my heart by faith enfold Thee.  
Who dieth thus dies well!*

## Tuesday of Holy Week

*And, behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose.*

Matthew 27:51–52

Wonderful and mighty signs accompanied the death of our Lord. The veil that hung before the Holy of Holies in the Temple at Jerusalem was woven four fingers thick and thirty yards long and broad. It hid the mercy-seat from all eyes and perpetually proclaimed to the Jews: “*Your iniquities have separated between you and your God*” (Isaiah 59:2). It was death for any one to go behind the veil. Only on the Great Day of Atonement dared the high priest pass behind its forbidding folds with the blood of the sacrificial lamb, which he sprinkled against the mercy-seat for the reconciliation of his own sins and the sins of the people (Hebrews 7:27). This massive veil was suddenly rent from top to bottom when our Lord Jesus expired on the cross. The true Lamb of God had now died for the sins of the world and won for sinners free and open access to the Throne of Mercy. Nothing can now separate the reconciled children of God from their heavenly Father, neither sin nor tribulation, nor even death. For we are told that at the death of the Savior an earthquake took place, and the graves were opened, and many sleeping saints came back to life. Death is now swallowed up in victory through the atoning death of the Prince of Life. Now we can triumphantly sing: “*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!*” In these rising saints we behold the glorious first-fruits of our Savior’s death-conquering sacrifice. Now the dry bones begin to stir and revive in the quickening breath of the heavenly Eastertide that henceforth should waft over this land of death and corruption from Christ’s saving cross, for the bodies of those saints arose, Matthew tells us (27:53) “*after [that is, in the manner of] His resurrection.*” “*Because I live, ye shall live also,*” He assures us (John 14:19).

*Come, ye faithful, raise the strain  
of triumphant gladness;  
God hath brought His Israel  
into joy from sadness;  
loosed from Pharaoh’s bitter yoke  
Jacob’s sons and daughters;  
led them with unmoistened foot  
through the Red Sea waters.*

*‘Tis the spring of souls today;  
Christ hath burst His prison  
and from three days’ sleep in death  
as a sun hath risen.  
All the winter of our sins,  
long and dark, is flying  
from His light, to whom we give  
thanks and praise undying.*

## Wednesday of Holy Week

*Now, when the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly, this was the Son of God. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned.*

Matthew 27:54; Luke 23:47–48

Wonderful and mighty signs in nature accompanied the death of our Lord. Great and glorious signs His saving death now calls forth also in the hearts of men. The dying thief was the firstfruits of His blessed cross among the Jews; this confessing and believing centurion is His first-fruits among the Gentiles. Of the brave Roman captain Gordius, who was dragged before the heathen authorities at Caesarea in the great persecution of the year 303 and who was urged to deny his Savior and thus to spare his life, it is told that he replied: “I remember the first centurion who stood by the cross of Jesus and became convinced of His divine glory by the mighty signs that were done, how He did not hesitate openly to confess his Savior’s name before the furious Jews by declaring, ‘Truly, this was the Son of God.’” Then this brave soldier signed himself with the cross and willingly suffered death for Jesus’ sake. So will we ever confess before all doubters and unbelievers of these last, sad days: “Truly, the crucified Jesus is the Son of God!” All of His mighty miracles attested to that fact, that we might believe it (John 20:30-31). Indeed, if Jesus had *not* truly been the Son of God, His life and death could not have been a sufficient ransom for our sins, His sacrifice could not have availed for all mankind, and He could not have overcome death and the devil for us. Knowing who this Savior is *for us*, let us, like the people under the cross, smite our breasts in deep contrition over our sins and cling confidently to our Savior, the very Son of God, whose merits won for us and for all mankind forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. God grant us such true repentance and faith for Jesus’ sake!

*With broken heart and contrite sigh,  
a trembling sinner, Lord, I cry;  
Thy pardoning grace is rich and free;  
O God, be merciful to me!*

*I smite upon my troubled breast,  
with deep and conscious guilt oppressed;  
Christ and His cross my only plea;  
O God, be merciful to me!*

*Far off I stand with tearful eyes  
nor dare uplift them to the skies;  
but Thou dost all my anguish see;  
O God, be merciful to me!*

*Nor alms nor deeds that I have done  
can for a single sin atone;  
to Calvary alone I flee;  
O God, be merciful to me!*



## Maundy Thursday

*The Jews, therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day, (for that Sabbath-day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers and broke the legs of the first and of the other which was crucified with Him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true that ye might believe. For these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced.*

John 19:31–37

Before our Savior began His final Passion, He told His disciples that all things written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man would be accomplished. And as He declared, so it came to pass. All the age-old, wonderful prophecies concerning His sufferings and work of redemption were fulfilled to the letter in His Passion. How the divine prophecies concerning His crucified and lifeless body were observed we learn from the text for today. All these divine prophecies write with indelible, golden letters for us over the cross: “*God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*” When the soldier opened our lifeless Savior’s side, we are told that blood and water came forth, His blood having separated as the evidence of true temporal death, His holy, precious blood, the sin-offering which He brought to the throne of divine justice for our transgressions, the incomparable price which He paid for the redemption of our sin-lost souls. Now we can joyfully and adoringly confess our confidence in the all-sufficiency of that sacrifice: “*The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin*” (I John 1:7). “*Now where remission of these [sins] is, there is no more offering for sin*” (Hebrews 10:18). Our redemption has been accomplished.

*Now, my soul, thy voice upraising,  
tell in sweet and mournful strain  
how the Crucified, enduring  
grief and wounds and dying pain,  
freely of His love was offered,  
sinless, was for sinners slain.*

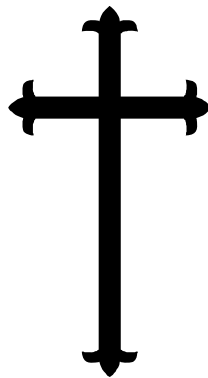
*Though His heart the spear is piercing,  
though His foes have seen Him die,  
blood and water thence are streaming  
in a tide of mystery;  
water from our guilt to cleanse us,  
blood to win us crowns on high.*

## Good Friday

*And after this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred-pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now, in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulcher, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' Preparation-day; for the sepulcher was nigh at hand.*

John 19:38–42

In a garden, the Garden of Eden, a man fell away from his God and brought sin and death into the world. In a garden, the Garden of Gethsemane, our blessed Lord began His atoning Passion for the sin of the world. In a garden, the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, sin and guilt and wrath were buried with our Lord Jesus Christ. The handwriting which accused us was nailed with Him to the cross. He buried it with Him in His tomb, where it will remain forever and never again testify against us. That is a glorious, happy truth, for which through all eternity we cannot sufficiently thank Him. Hear it, all ye troubled, agonizing souls that are filled with fear and dread on account of your sins: The grave of your Savior has swallowed up all your guilt and punishment. No one, neither God nor man nor Satan, can any longer accuse and condemn you for your sins. For what does the grave of your Savior witness so undeniably and comfortingly? Why, that He is really and truly dead, which means that He has obtained for you a real and true redemption from the wages of sin, which is death. “*Who is he that condemneth?*” Paul therefore exults, Romans 8:34. It is Christ that died for us “*and was buried according to the Scriptures,*” I Corinthians 15:4. How we ought to thank Him and adore His self-sacrificing love! “O Love! O Love! how strong art Thou! In shroud and grave Thou lay’st Him low, whose word the mountains rendeth!” But the greatest love we can show our crucified and buried Lord is by doing what Paul admonishes, Romans 6:3–4, “*Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death, that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*”



## Holy Saturday, Easter Eve

*Now, the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch; go your way; make it as sure as ye can. So they went and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch.*

Matthew 27:62–66

*“An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,”* Matthew 12:39–40 *“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,”* John 2:19. In these blessed words our Lord had clearly foretold His resurrection from the dead, and the chief priests and Pharisees had not forgotten them. Therefore they went to Pilate and persuaded him to seal the grave and to set a watch of soldiers around it. But *“He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision”* (Psalm 2:4). All their cunning, might, and wickedness are like mere gossamer threads when pitted against the omnipotence and wisdom of the Almighty. Instead of hindering the Lord’s resurrection, these wicked plotters had to serve to establish its truth beyond all doubt. All the lies and slanders which they invented after the Lord arose proved of no avail. The evidence of His resurrection is incontrovertible; and even the guards posted to prevent it from happening knew it to be a fact. The crucified Lord had risen indeed. To this day the voice of rejoicing and salvation is heard in the tabernacles of the righteous; for the right hand of the Lord is exalted, the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.

*The grave itself a garden is  
where loveliest flowers abound,  
since Christ, our never-fading Life,  
sprang from that holy ground.*

*Oh, give us grace to die to sin,  
that we, O Lord, may have  
a holy, happy rest in Thee,  
a Sabbath in the grave.*

*Lord, through the grave and gate of death  
may we with Thee arise  
to an eternal Easter Day  
of glory in the skies!*

## Easter Sunday

*The Lord is risen indeed.*

Luke 24:34

O day of happy tidings, O blessed Easter Day, when our great Sin-bearer, our crucified Lord Jesus Christ, rises triumphantly from the grave and brings life and immortality to light! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Now the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in His wings, has dispelled the dark gloom of the grave and will never, never set again. Now we can sing with exulting hearts: "I am content! My Jesus is my Light, My radiant Sun of Grace. His cheering rays beam blessings forth for all, Sweet comfort, hope, and peace. This Easter-sun brings life, salvation, And everlasting exultation. I am content!" O Thou risen and glorified Savior, Lord Jesus Christ, we pray Thee, give us to taste on this happy day of Thy glorious victory over death and the grave. Come to us and say to us as to weeping Mary there, "*Why weepest thou?*" Weep no more in guilty fear, like sorrowing Peter, over your sins; for, behold, I was delivered for your offenses and was raised again for your justification. Weep no more in trembling fear at the thought of death; for "*because I live, ye shall live also.*" Weep no more at the grave of your departed loved ones; for I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whosoever believeth in Me shall never die. Weep no more under your grievous afflictions; for I will not leave you comfortless, but will come to you and comfort you." O blessed Lord, help us to rise with Thee from the grave of sin, sorrow, and death and to praise and glorify Thee with newness of holy, Christian life, until we see Thee face to face in the land of undimmed light and happiness.

*Awake, my heart, with gladness,  
see what today is done,  
how after gloom and sadness  
comes forth the glorious Sun!  
My Savior there was laid  
where our bed must be made  
when to the realms of light  
our spirit wings its flight.*

*I cleave now and forever  
to Christ, a member true;  
my Head will leave me never,  
whate'er He passeth through;  
He treads the world beneath  
His feet and conquers death  
and hell and breaks sin's thrall —  
I'm with Him through it all.*

*He brings me to the portal  
that opens into bliss,  
where, graved in words immortal,  
this golden scripture is:  
"Who there are scorned with Me  
here with Me crowned shall be;  
who there with Me shall die  
shall here be raised as I!" Amen.*

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