

HOLY WEEK PRAYER

Normal type = A single voice

Bold type = All participants together

Italic type = Instructions not read

: (colon) = pause

Monday

O Lord, let my soul rise up to meet you

As the day rises to meet the sun.

Glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Come, let us sing to the Lord : let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation.

Song "We are Marching in the Light of God"

With you, O Lord, is the well of life : and in your light we see light.

Psalm 36:5-10

Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens,

And your faithfulness to the clouds.

Your righteousness is like the strong mountains,

your justice like the great deep :

You save both man and beast, O Lord.

How priceless is your love, O God! :

Your people take refuge under the shadow of your wings.

They feast on the abundance of your house :

you give them drink from the river of your delights.

For with you is the fountain of life :

in your light we see light.

Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you :

And your favor to those who are true of heart.

With you, O Lord, is the well of life : and in your light we see light.

Old Testament reading | Isaiah 42:1-9

1 "Here is my servant, whom I uphold,

my chosen one in whom I delight;

I will put my Spirit on him,

and he will bring justice to the nations.

2 He will not shout or cry out,

or raise his voice in the streets.
3 A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;
4 he will not falter or be discouraged
till he establishes justice on earth.
In his teaching the islands will put their hope.”
5 This is what God the Lord says—
the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out,
who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it,
who gives breath to its people,
and life to those who walk on it:
6 “I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness;
I will take hold of your hand.
I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people
and a light for the Gentiles,
7 to open eyes that are blind,
to free captives from prison
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.
8 “I am the Lord; that is my name!
I will not yield my glory to another
or my praise to idols.
9 See, the former things have taken place,
and new things I declare;
before they spring into being
I announce them to you.”

New Testament Gospel reading | Mark 14:3-9

3 While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.
4 Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, “Why this waste of perfume?
5 It could have been sold for more than a year’s wages[a] and the money given to the poor.”
And they rebuked her harshly.
6 “Leave her alone,” said Jesus. “Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7 The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 8 She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. 9 Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

With you, O Lord, is the well of life : and in your light we see light.

Contemporary Ugandan theologian Emmanuel Katongole has written, "Mary represents the 'rebel consciousness' that is essential to Jesus' gospel. Wherever the gospel is preached, we must remember that its good news will make you crazy. Jesus will put you at odds with the economic and political systems of our world. This gospel will force you to act, interrupting the world as it is in ways that make even pious people indignant."

Prayers for others

Our Father (Lord's Prayer)

While we sat in darkness, Lord Jesus Christ, you interrupted us with your life. Make us, your people, a holy interruption so that by your Spirit's power we may live as a light to the nations, even as we stumble through this world's dark night. Amen.

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you :

Wherever he may send you :

May he guide you through the wilderness :

Protect you through the storm :

May he bring you home rejoicing :

At the wonders he has shown you :

May he bring you home rejoicing :

Once again into our doors.

Tuesday

O Lord, let my soul rise up to meet you
As the day rises to meet the sun.

**Glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Come, let us bow down and bend the knee : let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

Song: "Lamb of God"

Save us, Lord, but not us alone : redeem your whole creation.

Psalm 71:1-3, 9-12

In you, Lord, I have taken refuge :

let me never be ashamed

In your righteousness, deliver me and set me free :

incline your ear to me and save me.

Be my strong rock of refuge, a castle to keep me safe :

you are my crag and my stronghold.

Do not cast me away in my old age :

forsake me not when my strength fails.

For my enemies are talking against me;

and those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together.

They say, "God has forsaken him;

go after him and seize him :

because there is none who will save."

O God, be not far from me :

come quickly to help me, O my God.

Save us, Lord, but not us alone : redeem your whole creation.

Old Testament reading | Isaiah 49:1-6

1 Listen to me, you islands;

hear this, you distant nations:

Before I was born the Lord called me;

from my mother's womb he has spoken my name.

2 He made my mouth like a sharpened sword,

in the shadow of his hand he hid me;

he made me into a polished arrow

and concealed me in his quiver.

3 He said to me, "You are my servant,

Israel, in whom I will display my splendor.”
4 But I said, “I have labored in vain;
I have spent my strength for nothing at all.
Yet what is due me is in the Lord’s hand,
and my reward is with my God.”
5 And now the Lord says—
he who formed me in the womb to be his servant
to bring Jacob back to him
and gather Israel to himself,
for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord
and my God has been my strength—
6 he says:
“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
to restore the tribes of Jacob
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”

New Testament Gospel reading | Mark 11:15-19

15 On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, 16 and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. 17 And as he taught them, he said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’ ”
18 The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.
19 When evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

Save us, Lord, but not us alone : redeem your whole creation.

Fourteenth-century anchorite Julian of Norwich wrote, "I often wondered why, through the great prescient wisdom of God, the beginning of sin was not prevented. For then it seemed to me that would have been well. I mourned and I sorrowed on this account, unreasonably, lacking discretion. But Jesus answered me with these words and said: Sin is necessary, but all will be well, and all will be well, and every kind of things will be well."

Prayers for others

Our Father (Lord's Prayer)

Savior of the world, save us from our sin, our sadness, and our self-deception. Give us courage to live in a world we cannot fix with hope that it has already been redeemed. Amen.

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you :

**Wherever he may send you :
May he guide you through the wilderness :
Protect you through the storm :
May he bring you home rejoicing :
At the wonders he has shown you :
May he bring you home rejoicing :
Once again into our doors.**

Wednesday

O Lord, let my soul rise up to meet you
As the day rises to meet the sun.

**Glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Come, let us bow down and bend the knee : let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

Song "O Lord, Have Mercy"

In your great mercy, O God : answer me with your unfailing help.

Psalm 69:8-15

Surely for your sake I have suffered reproach : **and shame has covered my face.**
I have become a stranger to my own kindred : **an alien to my mother's children.**
a stranger to my own mother's children;
for zeal for your house has eaten me up :
the scorn of those who scorn you has fallen on me.
I humbled myself with fasting : **but that was turned to my reproach**
I put on sackcloth also : **and became a byword among them.**
Those who sit at the gate murmur against me :
and the drunkards make songs about me.
But as for me, this is my prayer to you: **at the time you have set, O Lord.**
"In your great mercy, O God : **answer me with your unfailing help.**"

In your great mercy, O God : answer me with your unfailing help.

Old Testament reading | Isaiah 50:4-9a

4 The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue,
to know the word that sustains the weary.
He wakens me morning by morning,
wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.
5 The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears;
I have not been rebellious,
I have not turned away.
6 I offered my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard;
I did not hide my face
from mocking and spitting.
7 Because the Sovereign Lord helps me,
I will not be disgraced.

Therefore have I set my face like flint,
and I know I will not be put to shame.
8 He who vindicates me is near.
Who then will bring charges against me?
Let us face each other!
Who is my accuser?
Let him confront me!
9 It is the Sovereign Lord who helps me.
Who will condemn me?

New Testament Gospel reading | Matthew 26:1-5, 14-25

1 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, 2 “As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”
3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, 4 and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. 5 “But not during the festival,” they said, “or there may be a riot among the people.”
14 Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests 15 and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. 16 From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.
17 On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?”
18 He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.
20 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. 21 And while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.”
22 They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, “Surely you don’t mean me, Lord?”
23 Jesus replied, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”
25 Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, “Surely you don’t mean me, Rabbi?”
Jesus answered, “You have said so.”

In your great mercy, O God : answer me with your unfailing help.

Reflecting on her beating in the Winona County Jail, civil rights leader Fannie Lou Hamer said, “It wouldn’t solve any problem for me to hate whites just because they hate me. Oh, there’s so much hate, only God has kept the Negro sane.”

Prayers for others

Our Father (Lord's Prayer)

Merciful Lord, you revealed your glory by humbly serving the one who would betray you. Shower us with your mercy, Lord, and grow us up to be merciful. Amen.

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you :

Wherever he may send you :

May he guide you through the wilderness :

Protect you through the storm :

May he bring you home rejoicing :

At the wonders he has shown you :

May he bring you home rejoicing :

Once again into our doors.

Maundy Thursday

O Lord, let my soul rise up to meet you

As the day rises to meet the sun.

Glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit

As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Come, let us bow down and bend the knee : let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

Song "Guide My Feet"

Will you let me be your servant? : let me be as Christ to you?

Psalm 78:14-17

He led them with a cloud by day : **and all the night through with a glow of fire.**

He split the hard rocks in the wilderness : **and gave them drink as from the great deep.**

He brought streams out of the cliff : **and the waters gushed out like rivers.**

But they went on sinning against him : **rebelling in the desert against the Most High.**

Will you let me be your servant? : let me be as Christ to you?

Old Testament reading | Exodus 12:1-14a

1 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, 2 "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. 3 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.

4 If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat.

5 The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. 6 Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. 7 Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. 8 That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. 9 Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire—with the head, legs and internal organs. 10 Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. 11 This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover.

12 "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. 13 The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

14 "This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord—a lasting ordinance.

New Testament Gospel reading | John 13:1-15

1 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place.

"Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed

your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

Will you let me be your servant? : let me be as Christ to you?

Jean Vanier, founder of the L'Arche communities, has written, "To wash the feet of a brother or sister in Christ, to allow someone to wash our feet, is a sign that together we want to follow Jesus, to take the downward path, to find Jesus' presence in the poor and the weak. Is it not a sign that we too want to live a heart-to-heart relationship with others, to meet them as a person and a friend, and to live in communion with them? Is it not a sign that we yearn to be men and women of forgiveness, to be healed and cleansed and to heal and cleanse others and thus to live more fully in communion with Jesus?"

Prayers for others

Our Father (Lord's Prayer)

Lord Jesus Christ, you knelt to wash from our feet the dirt out of which you made us. Teach us to humbly serve one another so that the world may know we are your disciples. Amen.

**May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you :
Wherever he may send you :
May he guide you through the wilderness :
Protect you through the storm :
May he bring you home rejoicing :
At the wonders he has shown you :
May he bring you home rejoicing :
Once again into our doors.**

Good Friday

O Lord, let my soul rise up to meet you
As the day rises to meet the sun.

**Glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Come, let us bow down and bend the knee : let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

Song "Were You There?"

He who hung the earth upon the waters : today he is hung upon the cross.

Psalm 22:1-2, 9-11

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? : **and are so far from my cry and from the words of my distress?**

O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer: **by night as well, but I find no rest.**

Yet you are he who took me out of the womb : **and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.**

I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born : **you were my God when I was still in my mother's womb.**

Be not far from me, for trouble is near : **and there is none to help.**

He who hung the earth upon the waters : today he is hung upon the cross.

Old Testament reading | Genesis 22:1-18

1 Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."

6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, 7 Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?"

"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.

"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"

8 Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.

9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." 13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram[a] caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place "The Lord Will Provide." And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided." 15 The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time 16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring[b] all nations on earth will be blessed,[c] because you have obeyed me."

New Testament Gospel reading | John 19:1-37

1 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. 2 The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe 3 and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face. 4 Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." 5 When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" 6 As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him." 7 The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." 8 When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, 9 and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. 10 "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" 11 Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." 12 From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." 13 When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). 14 It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. 15 But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked.

“We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered.

16 Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. 17 Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

19 Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: j

Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. 20 Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. 21 The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.”

22 Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

23 When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

24 “Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.”

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said,

“They divided my clothes among them

and cast lots for my garment.”

So this is what the soldiers did.

25 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” 27 and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

28 Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” 29 A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. 30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

31 Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. 32 The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other.

33 But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. 35 The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. 36 These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken,” 37 and, as another scripture says, “They will look on the one they have pierced.”

He who hung the earth upon the waters : today he is hung upon the cross.

John Chrysostom, a fourth-century bishop and preacher in Constantinople, asked, “Do you see how the devil is defeated by the very weapons of his prior victory? The devil had vanquished Adam by means of a tree. Christ vanquished the devil by means of the tree of the Cross. The

tree sent Adam to hell. The tree of the Cross brought him back from there. The tree revealed Adam in his weakness, laying prostrate, naked and low. The tree of the Cross manifested to all the world the victorious Christ, naked and nailed on high. Adam's death sentence passed on to all who came after him. Christ's death gave life to all his children."

Prayers for others

Our Father (Lord's Prayer)

While we were still your enemies, Lord Jesus Christ, you suffered and died for us, winning the victory over death for our sakes. Give us grace to lift you up as we follow the way of your cross so that all people may be drawn unto you. Amen.

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you :

Wherever he may send you :

May he guide you through the wilderness :

Protect you through the storm :

May he bring you home rejoicing :

At the wonders he has shown you :

May he bring you home rejoicing :

Once again into our doors.

Holy Saturday

O Lord, let my soul rise up to meet you
As the day rises to meet the sun.

**Glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Come, let us bow down and bend the knee : let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

Silence

Listen, Lord, to the cries of your poor: break hell's hold, fling wide heaven's door.

Psalm 31:1-5

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame : **deliver me in your righteousness.**

Incline your ear to me : **make haste to deliver me.**

Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and my stronghold, **for the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.**

Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me : **for you are my tower of strength.**
Into your hands I commend my spirit : **for you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.**

Listen, Lord, to the cries of your poor: break hell's hold, fling wide heaven's door.

Old Testament reading | Job 14:1-14

- 1 "Mortals, born of woman,
are of few days and full of trouble.
- 2 They spring up like flowers and wither away;
like fleeting shadows, they do not endure.
- 3 Do you fix your eye on them?
Will you bring them before you for judgment?
- 4 Who can bring what is pure from the impure?
No one!
- 5 A person's days are determined;
you have decreed the number of his months
and have set limits he cannot exceed.
- 6 So look away from him and let him alone,
till he has put in his time like a hired laborer.
- 7 "At least there is hope for a tree:
If it is cut down, it will sprout again,
and its new shoots will not fail.
- 8 Its roots may grow old in the ground

and its stump die in the soil,
9 yet at the scent of water it will bud
and put forth shoots like a plant.
10 But a man dies and is laid low;
he breathes his last and is no more.
11 As the water of a lake dries up
or a riverbed becomes parched and dry,
12 so he lies down and does not rise;
till the heavens are no more, people will not awake
or be roused from their sleep.
13 "If only you would hide me in the grave
and conceal me till your anger has passed!
If only you would set me a time
and then remember me!
14 If someone dies, will they live again?
All the days of my hard service
I will wait for my renewal to come.

New Testament Gospel reading | John 19:38-42

38 Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. 39 He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. 40 Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. 41 At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. 42 Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Listen, Lord, to the cries of your poor: break hell's hold, fling wide heaven's door.

These words are from an ancient homily for Holy Saturday: "Something strange is happening – there is a great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness. The whole earth keeps silence because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. God has died in the flesh and hell trembles with fear. He has gone to search for our first parents, as for lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow the captives Adam and Eve, he who is both God and the son of Eve. The Lord approached them bearing the cross, the weapon that had won him the victory. At the sign of him, Adam, the first man he had created, struck his breast in terror and cried out to everyone: 'My Lord be with you all.' Christ answered him: 'And with your spirit.' He took him by the hand and raised him up, saying, 'Awake O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.' "

Prayers for others

Our Father (Lord's Prayer)

As you hovered over the darkness that covered the earth at the beginning of time, may your Spirit move among us in the silence of this day, preparing for a new life. Amen.

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you :

Wherever he may send you :

May he guide you through the wilderness :

Protect you through the storm :

May he bring you home rejoicing :

At the wonders he has shown you :

May he bring you home rejoicing :

Once again into our doors.