

A Year in the Church, Lent, Holy Week and Eastertide with Cross-Quarter Days

Discipleship Formation Program

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The Lord sets the prisoner free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow.

Shrove Tuesday

The word *shrove* is a form of the English word *shrive*, which means to obtain absolution for one's sins. Shrove Tuesday was named after the custom of Christians to be "shriven" before the start of Lent, meaning to have sought and received absolution.

It is also tradition in many societies to eat pancakes or other foods made with the butter, eggs and fat that would be given up during the Lenten season. Hence the popular name of Pancake Tuesday for the day before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent.

In Portuguese and Spanish speaking countries, among others, it is also known as Carnival. This derives from Medieval Latin *carnelevamen* ("the putting away of flesh") and to another aspect of the Lenten fast, to abstain from eating meat. It is often celebrated with street processions and costumes.

The most famous of these events has become the Brazilian Carnival (Mardi Gras) in Rio de Janeiro. In North America the most famous Mardi Gras celebrations is in New Orleans.

Whether it is pancakes, omelets, sausages or other rich and fatty foods, this is a time for individuals to begin to think about Lent, and their Lenten fast (often people think of something to give up during Lent) and to confess their sins.

Making pancakes

The following liturgy may be used to make pancakes.

Leader: Our Loving God, We mark this Shrove Tuesday, celebrating with pancakes and remembering the ways your ancient stories and living words combine, calling us to give up greed and find fullness in faith and sweetness in serving. Give us a taste for your truth and a hunger for helping others.

1 egg beaten, "God gives life to all things" (1 Tim 6:13)

Leader Creator God, we thank you for the life you have given us. Help us to honour life in all the earth.

¾ cup of milk, “Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation” (1 Peter 2:2)

Leader Lord Jesus, your good news of salvation is like milk that nourishes the new born child. We are encouraged to eagerly desire it.

1 cup of flour, “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Deut 8:3)

Leader Lord God, thank you for your words that are better than bread. Help us to rely on what is good and substantial and lasting; to be generous sharers of food and truth; to offer our resources freely to those in need.

A pinch of salt, “You are the salt of the earth” Matthew 5:13

Leader Lord Jesus, help us as your followers to be salt, preserving what is of value, healing what is wounded and bringing out the good flavours in the world.

Once all ingredients are added to the bowl and mixed well, cook the pancake mix. As you sit down to eat, pray again.

Leader Our Loving God, We mark this Shrove Tuesday, celebrating with pancakes and remembering the ways your ancient stories and living words combine calling us to give up greed and find fullness in faith and sweetness in serving. Give us a taste for your truth and a hunger for helping others.

All **Amen.**

Lent

Lent is a penitential season. This comes from the Old English *Lencten* and probably from a Proto-Germanic word, *lengatinaz*. Both words literally mean “time of lengthening” and referred to spring when the days begin to get longer. With the lengthen of the days and more sunlight, Lent is both literal and metaphorical a way of bringing God’s light into our life for the those studying to be Christian and reclaiming that light for those who have sinned and turned away from God.

As those who are preparing to be baptized, the catechumenate grows closer to being drawn into God’s family in the waters of baptism as they look forward to a future in God’s kingdom. Moreover, as the early church expanded and adopted the 40 days Lenten period follow Nicaea in 325, the whole community undertakes a Lenten fast in solidarity with the soon-to-be baptized.

Even baptized Christians who had fallen back into sinful patterns look to Lent to be forgiven their sins and to be re-immersed in God's glorious light.

The opportunity to once again use this penitential time of introspection to fulfill the command to take up our crosses and follow Jesus prepares us for the glory of Easter. It's difficult to fast from distracting luxuries and have introspection to root out sinful patterns. But, like a good spring-cleaning, our spiritual lives are better for it. This season is an opportunity to prepare ourselves to fully celebrate Jesus' victory over sin and death.

Symbols of Lent: Ashes

In the Latin West following the Council of Nicaea in 325 there was six weeks of fasting, excluding Sundays, which are always a day of celebration of the resurrection. This meant Lent was 36 days long. The extension of Lent to before the first Sunday in Lent to the Wednesday prior occurred in the sixth century.¹ It would still take another few centuries until the rite of ashes would make it into the church's liturgical tradition. Our first indication of ashes comes from a church in Benevento Italy in 1091.²

It has become tradition to make the ashes from the palm branches from the previous years Palm Sunday celebration. The witness of the faithful is prophetic and counter-cultural. We live in a culture that celebrates material gain and the ability to keep death at bay. The rite of the imposition of ashes reminds us that death comes for us all, whether rich or poor.

Ash Wednesday reminds us of death's presence in our lives that stretches all the way back to the beginning and Adam and Eve. Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return. This reminder is juxtaposed against the "underserved, unearned richness of God's grace."³ While death is a reality of life, God's grace promises that not even death is beyond God's redemptive power.

As you prepare to attend Ash Wednesday service the following prayer is to be said.

Help us, O Lord, to fix our minds on the sufferings and temptations of Jesus Christ.

Help us to see him far from home and friends, enduring the trials of humanity. Help us to see him tortured by hunger, yet not using his powers

¹ (Connell 2006) 75

² (Connell 2006) 75

³ (Connell 2006) 76

for selfish ends; longing to open the eyes of all to His glory, yet not stooping to sensational means.

Help us to look steadily at him, who suffered such things for us. Help us to behold his great love. Help us to see his sinless perfection.

When we are in pain or sickness, grief or sorrow, fear or anxiety, help to turn to him who bore not only pain but also the weight and burden of our sins.

When we seek to conquer sin and bring our lives back into God's light, help us to turn to him.

At this the beginning of the season of Lent, help now to turn to him.

Holy Jesus, sin-bearer; take our hearts and purify them; take our lives and transform them; take all we are this Lent and make us more like you, for your name's sake. **Amen.**⁴

Lent Activities

Throughout the season of Lent there will be one activity each day. Sundays, while not technically part of Lent, there are prayers to be said surrounding common sins that we all carry. You are invited to reflect upon the sin throughout the week and how it shapes you and your interactions with the world.

Ash Wednesday Day 1: Pray for your enemies

Day 2: Walk, carpool, bike or bus it.

Day 3: Don't turn on the radio, podcast or music player

Day 4: Give \$20 to a non-profit of your choosing

Sunday February 21

Against Gluttony:

Once again, Lord Jesus Christ, I face the power of Gluttony.

When my stomach aches and my mouth waters, teach me to hunger and thirst for justice.

⁴ (Williams 1972) 58 (adapted)

When my body is tired and my spirit weak, give me grace to hide in your wounded side.

When I am tempted to turn from the way of the cross, help me to see the prize set before me.

Deliver me from gluttony, that whether I am fasting or feasting, my body's desire might be for your table, where none go hungry but all find bread that satisfies.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.⁵

Day 5: Take 5 minutes of silence at noon

Day 6: Look out the window until you find something of beauty you had not noticed before

Day 7: Give 5 items of clothing to Goodwill

Day 8: No bitching day

Day 9: Do someone else's chore

Day 10: Buy a few \$5 fast food gift cards to give to homeless people you encounter

Sunday February 28

Against Lust:

Once again, Lord Jesus Christ, I face the power of lust.

When my eyes are drawn to images that only stir up desire, turn them to the cross on which you died.

When my longs for another to which it does not belong, draw me to your side as a dearly beloved bride.

When my thoughts turn towards pleasure which are not mine to enjoy, help me to imagine the pain of infidelity and the cost of broken trust.

Deliver me from lust, that I might embrace each soul and body as a sister or brother in you.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.⁶

⁵ (Claiborne 2012) 74 - adapted

⁶ (Claiborne 2012) 74

Day 11: Call an old friend

Day 12: Pray the Paper (pray for people and situations in today's news)

Day 13: Read Psalm 139 <http://bible.oremus.org>

Day 14: Pay a few sincere compliments

Day 15: Bring your own mug when you get coffee

Day 16: Educate yourself about human trafficking <https://www.ontario.ca/page/human-trafficking>

Sunday March 7

Against the Love of Money:

Once again, Lord Jesus Christ, I face the power of avarice.

When I worry about survival and grasp for false security, remind me of the boy who shared his meal so you could feed the multitudes.

When I am tempted to store up treasure in savings accounts, help me make eternal investments in your kingdom and trust your economy of love.

When I wonder who will care for me when I am old, give me elders to love and young friends to mentor in your way of abundant life.

Deliver me from avarice, that I might know the love that casts out fear and receive the gifts of your provision through another's hand.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.⁷

Day 17: Forgive someone

Day 18: Internet diet – no social media

Day 19: Change one light in your house to an LED light

Day 20: Check out morning and evening prayer at <http://dailyoffice.wordpress.com>

Day 21: Ask for help

Day 22: Tell someone what you are grateful for

Sunday March 14

Against Anger:

⁷ (Claiborne 2012) 75

Once again, Lord Jesus Christ, I face the power of anger

When I am harmed by another, or think myself to have been, give me patience to go to that person with a humble spirit, seeking to be reconciled.

When I am outraged at injustice show me clearly how I too must repent of complicity in this world's broken systems and cover me in your mercy.

When I can neither rest nor work because of indignation that stirs my spirit, teach me the power of forgiveness and the freedom of love.

Deliver me from anger, that I might not be consumed by its fire but turn the great energy of my soul toward a desire to serve you and your little ones.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner. ⁸

Day 23: Introduce yourself to a neighbour

Day 24: Read Psalm 121 <http://bible.oremus.org>

Day 25: Bake a cake

Day 26: No shopping day – this includes amazon

Day 27: Light a virtual candle <https://healgrief.org/candle-gallery/>

Day 28: Light an actual candle

Sunday March 21

Against Vainglory:

Once again, Lord Jesus Christ, I face the power of vainglory

When I am praised for the good you have done in me, help me to praise your goodness and to remember the sin that keeps me from praising you without ceasing.

When I long for others to know how much I am suffering for you, humble me before the cross and overwhelm my spirit with your unsurpassable love.

When I imagine the great things I might do for you, give me small things to do by the power of your great love, and grant me strength to do them.

⁸ (Claiborne 2012) 76

Deliver me from vainglory, that I might not be handed over to pride or sadness but ascend by your little way to the humility in which my joy may be complete.

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

Day 29: Write a thank you note to your favourite teacher/professor

Day 30: Invest in canvas shopping bags

Day 31: Use freecycle or Facebook Marketplace

Day 32: Donate art supplies to your local elementary school or daycare

Day 33: Read John 8:1-11 <http://bible.oremus.org>

Day 34: Worship at a friend's mosque, synagogue or church and look for the beauty

Sunday March 28

Once again, Lord Jesus Christ, I face the power of pride.

When I am tempted to turn your good gifts into my own achievements, teach me to pray, "My help comes from the Lord".

When I imagine my discernment is superior to your clear commandments, grant me faith to trust your word, which cannot fail.

When the opinions of my sisters and brothers seem simpleminded, help me to recall how you spoke to Balaam through his donkey, and if you should choose to speak through me, help me to remember the same.

Deliver me from pride, that I might submit my twisted will to yours and grow up into the fullness of the divine image that you stamped on bodies made from clay.

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

Day 35: Confess a secret

Day 36: No sugar day – where else is there sweetness in your life?

Day 37: Give \$20 to a local non-profit

Day 38: Educate yourself about a saint <https://www.catholic.org/saints/>

Day 39: Pray for peace

Day 40: Pray for your enemies then decide which of these exercises you'll keep for good.⁹

Cross Quarter Day: The Annunciation of our Lord to the Virgin Mary, March 25

⁹ (Bolz-Weber 2012) The 40 day challenge has been adapted.

The tradition, which has come down from the apostolic age, tells us that the Incarnation was announced on the 25th of March. It was at night, when Mary was alone and in prayer, that the Archangel Gabriel appeared before her, and asked her, in the name of God, to conceive and bear a child that she would name Jesus. This encounter is juxtaposed to the serpent and Eve and that encounter described in Genesis. In Genesis there is disobedience, while in the annunciation there is the willing obedience of a teenage girl against all odds to say yes to God.

Jesus is also often referred to as the second Adam both in scripture and in theological studies. Paul in 1 Corinthians says,

“Thus it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living being’; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven.”

This is also the day, according to ancient sources, that Jesus died on the cross. The symbolism of life beginning on this day, and ending on this day so our sins may be forgiven and we can have eternal life should not be lost on us. To celebrate this circle, serve a cake. A perfect symbolic food would be an angel food cake for the archangel Gabriel, baked in a tube pan for the endless circle of eternal life in God, decorated with the frosting highlighted with blue for Mary or sprinkle with icing sugar, white for holiness.

Ingredients:

- 1-1/4 cups egg whites (about 9)
 - 1-1/2 cups sugar, divided
 - 1 cup cake flour
 - 1-1/4 teaspoons cream of tartar
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 - 1/4 teaspoon almond extract
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt
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- Place egg whites in a large bowl; let stand at room temperature 30 minutes. Sift 1/2 cup sugar and flour together twice; set aside.
 - Place oven rack in the lowest position. Preheat oven to 350°. Add cream of tartar, extracts and salt to egg whites; beat on medium speed until soft peaks form. Gradually add remaining sugar, about 2 tablespoons at a time, beating on high until stiff peaks form. Gradually fold in flour mixture, about 1/2 cup at a time.

- Gently spoon into an ungreased 10-in. tube pan. Cut through batter with a knife to remove air pockets. Bake until lightly browned and entire top appears dry, 35-40 minutes. Immediately invert pan; cool completely, about 1 hour.
- Run a knife around side and center tube of pan. Remove cake to a serving plate and sprinkle with icing sugar

Before serving,

Leader Let us pray

Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord, that we who have known the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ, announced by an angel to the Virgin Mary, may by his cross and passion be brought to the glory of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**¹⁰

Holy Week

Palms Sunday

The palm branches that are blessed and brought home on Palm Sunday are placed near a cross or a bible. They remind us that Lent is the slow coming of spring to the earth, the renewal of life. They are like the great “Hosanna” with which we hail our risen Lord.

After dinner or at another time on Palm Sunday, gather where the palms have been placed with a cross or the bible.

Leader: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

All **Hosanna in the highest!**

Leader We have come to the last day of Lent. Today we heard the reading of the Passion. That story will remain with us as we leave Lent behind on Holy Thursday and enter into the Three Days when we celebrate the mystery of Christ passing, through suffering and death to life at God’s right hand.

¹⁰ (Anglican Church of Canada 2007) 125

Listen to the words of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

(We are) always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh.

The word of the Lord

All **Thanks be to God**

Leader: Let us pray

Blessed are you God of Israel, so rich in love and mercy. Let these branches ever remind us of Christ's triumph. May we who bear them rejoice in his cross and sing your praise for ever and ever.

All **Amen**¹¹

Maundy Thursday

The foot washing has been part of Holy Thursday since the early seventh century. It is a concrete representation of our call to service as the foot washing reminds us of Jesus' example and command to love one another as he has loved us. This ritual reminds us that we are to serve others in concrete actions.

If you are with others, Place a pitcher of warm water, a large bowl and a towel in front of those gathered. If you are alone, place the pitcher of water, bowl and towel on a table in front of you.

Leader Loving God, you show us by example how to love. Today we celebrate Holy Thursday, we remember when you washed the feet of your disciples. Give us the strength to wash each other's feet, not only in the ritual moment of today, but in all moments of our lives. May we recommit ourselves to the service of others. Amen.

A reading from the Gospel of John 13:1-15

¹¹ (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, US 1989) 140-142

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.' For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.'

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Leader We follow Jesus' example and celebrate our own foot washing of feet.
 Throughout our time together, pay close attention to what you are
 experiencing and how you feel.

If washing the feet with children

(Name) I love you. Be kind to one another, help each other, and love everyone you meet.

If washing the feet of adults

(Name) I love you and Christ loves you. Share the love of Christ with everyone you meet.

If alone, take time to wash your hands slowly and deliberately

(Aloud) I am loved by Christ and I will love everyone I meet.

After feet or hands have been washed and patted dry gently with a towel

Leader For all who serve in our church: May they follow the example of Christ and uphold the dignity of all people

For all who serve in our community and country: May they work for the good of all people, especially people who are poor and relegated to the margins of society.

For all serve others every day, especially parents, guardians, teachers, coaches, and all who practice selflessness and self-gift: May they find comfort and hope knowing that their actions make a difference in so many ways.

For ourselves: May we live lives of service to God and others, even when it is difficult or requires extra effort.

Loving God, we praise you in a special way today as we celebrate Holy Thursday. Be with us as we continue our journey through Holy Week, that we may closely align our lives with yours, knowing our call to serve others following the example you gave. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.¹²

Good Friday

Place a cross or crucifix on a table in front of you and the candle from Candlemas (lit the candle). It is also common for the faithful to fast on Good Friday from sunrise to sunset, drinking only water.

Leader Lord of Glory, we proclaim your death and look forward to your resurrection. As we contemplate your cross, the tree on which you hung so that we may have life, may we be ever aware of the life that springs from death, the light that rises from darkness, and the hope that banishes fear. Draw us close to you, so that we may know the glory your cross points to. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen

Reading from the Gospel of John 18:1-19:42

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed

¹² (The Liturgical Press 2020)

him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, 'For whom are you looking?' They answered, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus replied, 'I am he.' Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, 'I am he', they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, 'For whom are you looking?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.' This was to fulfil the word that he had spoken, 'I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.' Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?'

Jesus before the High Priest

So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

Peter Denies Jesus

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter, 'You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?' He said, 'I am not.' Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing round it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, 'I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said.' When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, 'Is that how you answer the high priest?' Jesus answered, 'If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?' Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Peter Denies Jesus Again

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, 'You are not also one of his disciples, are you?' He denied it and said, 'I am not.' One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, 'Did I not see you in the garden with him?' Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

Jesus before Pilate

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this man?' They answered, 'If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.' The Jews replied, 'We are not permitted to put anyone to death.' (This was to fulfil what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.' Pilate asked him, 'What is truth?'

Jesus Sentenced to Death

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, 'I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' They shouted in reply, 'Not this man, but Barabbas!' Now Barabbas was a bandit.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.' So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!' When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.' The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.'

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, 'Where are you from?' But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, 'Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?' Jesus answered him, 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.' From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, 'If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.'

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, 'Here is your King!' They cried out, 'Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but the emperor.' Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews", but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews."' Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.' When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfil what the scripture says,

'They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.'
And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a

branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Jesus' Side Is Pierced

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'None of his bones shall be broken.' And again another passage of scripture says, 'They will look on the one whom they have pierced.'

The Burial of Jesus

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

The litany of forgiveness

For the times we have not loved as we are called to love, Father forgive
For the times we have cultivated doubt instead of hope, Father forgive
For the times that selfishness, greed, and lust influence our decisions, Father forgive
For the times we nurture isolation instead of community, Father forgive
For the times we hear the needs of others but refuse to act, Father forgive
For the times we pass judgment on ourselves and those who we encounter, Father forgive
For the times we create division, Father forgive
For the times we neglect care for our common home, Father forgive
For the times we are not good stewards of the gifts you give us, Father forgive

Intercessions

For the church, for Todd our Bishop, and for all women and men who live their lives in service of God: May they know the intimacy of authentic relationship with Christ.

For all who are sick or suffering in body, mind or spirit: May they know the great compassion of God through those who care for them.

For peace in our families, communities, nation and world: May all seek resolution to disagreement and difference in ways that protect the life and dignity of all people.

For all who are unemployed or underemployed: May they find opportunities to use their gifts for the service of others in ways that are sustaining and life-giving.

For all who grieve: May they know the consolation of hope found in Christ.

Loving God, we praise you in a special way today as we celebrate Good Friday. Be with us as we continue our journey through Holy Week, that we may more closely align our lives with yours, knowing that death never wins, and that life and love always prevail. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.¹³

The Great Easter Vigil

As you prepare for tonight's prayer, place the candle from Candlemas on a table in front of you. Dim the lights or turn them off if possible.

Leader We gather this night to rejoice in Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, the one whom no darkness can overcome, the one death cannot destroy.

The candle is lit

Leader We give thanks, O God, for the light this evening that illumines our hearts and homes, and for your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, a light so filled with glory and power, a light undimmed by sin and death, a light that guides peoples and nations.

May we welcome this light of Christ into our lives. **Amen**

¹³ (The Liturgical Press 2020)

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him." This is my message for you.' So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Leader Loving God, we celebrate your saving work through our ancestors in faith, the resurrection of your Son and in our lives today. Give us courage to confront darkness of this world, knowing that the risen Christ brings light and life to all. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.¹⁴

Eastertide

Easter Day

Create a prayer space full of greenery and flowers. On a table in front of you, place a bowl of water.

Leader Loving God, we celebrate this day of gladness and rejoicing, basking in the depth of your love revealed in the empty tomb. May we, like the disciples, make haste to share the news of the resurrection with everyone we encounter. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A reading from the Gospel of John

¹⁴ (The Liturgical Press 2020)

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Profession of Faith

Leader Let us confess the faith of our baptism, as we say,
All I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

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

After the confession of faith sign yourself with the water in front of you.

Intercessions

For Todd our Bishop and all church leaders: May they guide the faithful with the patience and kindness the risen Christ shows to his disciples.

For all who support and nurture life, especially healthcare workers, teachers, and public servants: May they find joy in their vocation of service to others.

For all who celebrate new beginnings this Easter season: May they know life and love in their experiences and opportunities.

For all who work for equality and justice: May they never tire of proclaiming the peace of Christ.

For all who are sad or suffering during this time of Easter Alleluias: May they find consolation of Christ through all those who love and support them.

Leader Loving God, we celebrate the life and love you proclaim and share with us. May we know the joy of your resurrection in our hearts as we strive to share this joy with others. Like Mary, Simon Peter and the beloved disciple, may we run to spread the Good News of the life and love you share. We ask this through Christ, our Lord, Amen.¹⁵

Blessing of the Easter Foods

After the fasting of Lent, and the Easter Fast from Thursday night until Vigil (the Good Friday Fast) the foods of Easter have a special place. The following blessing prayer may be used before the meal that breaks the Easter Fast or with Easter dinner celebrations on Easter Sunday.

Leader: God of glory, the eyes of all turn to you as we celebrate Christ's victory over sin and death.

Bless us and this food of our first Easter meal. May we who gather at the Lord's table, continue to celebrate the joy of his resurrection and be admitted finally to his heavenly banquet. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

All **Amen**

Second Sunday of Easter: Divine Mercy Sunday

A reading from the Gospel of John (Jn 20:19-31)

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,

¹⁵ (The Liturgical Press 2020)

"Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

The word of the Lord
Thanks ne to God

Preparing Easter Eggs. Although eggs, in general, were a traditional symbol of fertility and rebirth, in Christianity, Easter eggs symbolize the empty tomb of Jesus. One ancient tradition was the staining of Easter eggs with the colour red in memory of the blood of Christ, shed as at that time of his crucifixion and marked with a golden cross.

This custom of the Easter egg can be traced to early Christians of Mesopotamia, and from there it spread into Eastern Europe through the Orthodox Churches, and later into Europe through Catholic and Protestant Churches.

Easter Eggs should be prepared with red dye and a cross painted on the egg in gold. Once prepared, take time this week to visit the grave of a loved one and place the Easter Egg on the grave/headstone to remind us the victory over death that was won on the cross. The following prayer may be said.

Let us pray,

God of all, we pray to you for those we love but see no longer. Grant them your peace; let light perpetual shine upon them; and in your loving wisdom and almighty power, work in them the good purpose of your perfect will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**¹⁶

How to make hard boiled eggs

¹⁶ (Anglican Church of Canada 1985) 602

1. *Place the desired number of eggs carefully in a large pot.*
2. *Add enough cold water to cover the eggs completely.*
3. *Place the pan on the stove on high heat and bring the water to a boil.*
4. *Cover the pan and turn off the heat.*
5. *Let sit on the stove for 20 minutes.*
6. *After 20 minutes run the pan of eggs under cold water until the shells are cool to the touch.*

How to Blow Out Eggs

1. *Wash your raw eggs well.*
2. *Carefully poke a small hole in each pointed end of the raw egg.*
3. *Hold the egg over a bowl and blow into one of the holes.*
4. *The egg liquid should slowly come out the other hole.*
5. *Sometimes this is a big job and can take some time to complete. Kids should get an adults help and permission before trying this.*
6. *Once the eggshell is empty, rinse it off and set it aside to dry.*

Third Sunday of Easter

A reading from Luke (Lk 24:36b-48)

Jesus himself stood among the disciples and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you - that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Beginning at home is not just a theme of this study, but is found in the scripture for this week, "the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and

forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning first from Jerusalem.” To that end, it is time for some spring cleaning. Pull furniture away from the walls, wash the baseboards, dust the shelves and put everything away. While physically cleaning our spaces remember our spaces help form and inform our spiritual lives. While cleaning try to keep one or a few of the following in mind.

- 1- Purge negative thoughts and feelings*
- 2- Clear the clutter of unmet expectations and unmet prayers*
- 3- Dust away old resentments and past hurts*
- 4- Ask God to scrub your heart clean as you forgive and are forgiven.*
- 5- Kick a bad habit to the curb.*
- 6- Clean with and for God*

Fourth Sunday of Easter: Good Shepherd Sunday

A reading from John (Jn 10:11-18)

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Sit for 5 minutes in silence, clear your mind and focus on only your breathe. Set an alarm to remind you when 5 minutes has passed. After the 5 minutes say the following prayer. See if you can do this every day throughout the week as a practice of listening for the voice of the shepherd calling your name.

Leader: Oh God, we are so preoccupied with counting sheep that we forget how much we need a shepherd.

We are so occupied with numbers and statistics that we forget to leave the counting to you.

You already know the sum of the hairs on the very heads that you have anointed.

You know our days, our challenges, our successes and our needs.

Today, we confess that our greatest need is for a shepherd.

And the lesson we have yet to learn is how to be your sheep.

Amen.

Fifth Sunday of Easter: I am the true vine

A reading from John (Jn 15:1-8)

Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

We are part of a family, both in human terms and divine terms. The following set of activities are a fun way to explore how we are connected to our past. Take some time this week to engage with your roots.

- *Excavate Grandparents attic or basement. Countless treasures and stories hide among the old "junk" packed away in boxes and trunks.*
- *Tour the cemetery. Visit family grave sites.*
- *Throw a birthday party for an ancestor.*
- *Prepare Great-grandma's favorite family recipe. Don't keep Great-grandma's apple pie recipe a secret. Or grab an old church cookbook and have fun.*
- *Make a family trivia game.*

- *Create a time capsule—in reverse. If your ancestors had left a time capsule, what would have been in it? Pick an ancestor and try to create a snapshot of his or her life. If you have objects such as photographs, recipe cards or diaries, make copies and include them in the time capsule.*

Sixth Sunday of Easter: Love one another as I have love you

A reading from John (Jn 15:9-17)

Jesus said, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

This week engage in one activity of love for someone in your life. It could be as easy as making dinner, setting aside time to watch a movie or going for a walk. Think about widening that circle beyond your family. Stopping at Tim Horton's on the way to work, grab a tea for your co-worker is a small gesture, but one born of Love. What will you do this week to show love?.

Seventh Sunday of Easter – Ascension transferred: Go into the world

A reading from Luke (Lk 24:44-53)

Jesus said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he

withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

The word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Time to share your faith and your doubts with others. The question is how? Here is your three step guide to sharing your faith with others.

1. Follow Christ. *You, living the life God has called you to live and being the person God has uniquely gifted you to be – that’s a great testimony to God. Each of us is a walking billboard for the goodness of God and a testimony that God can redeem. You don’t have to be perfect. Nobody expects you to be flawless or have all the answers. And if you try to portray that to people, you’ll come across as arrogant and fake. You don’t have to have a perfect testimony, but you do have to follow a perfect Savior.*

2. Share your story. *Your story is compelling, riveting and life changing. And sharing your faith involves sharing your story. Be honest, transparent, and vulnerable. People will connect with your brokenness more quickly and fully than they ever will your “awesomeness.”*

3. Invite other people into your story. *Build relationships with people. And not just so that you can “get them saved.” Genuinely love people. Invest in them. Be their friend. Listen to their story. Value them as God’s creation. Look for ways to serve them, expecting nothing in return and with no strings attached. In so doing, you’re inviting them into the story that God’s writing through you.*

Cross Quarter day - Rogation day April 25

For Christians this cross-quarter day began to take shape in 511 at the Council of Orleans with the institution of Rogation Days, celebrated in the spring on April 25th. The faithful typically observed Rogation days by fasting and abstinence in preparation to celebrate the Ascension, and farmers often had their crops blessed at this time.

If you are a gardener, then now is the perfect time to ask God’s blessing on your upcoming harvest. If you are not a gardener, then we can still pray for an abundant harvest for all farmers who work so hard to feed us. (If you have ordered your seeds for the coming year, place them in front of you with some soil from the garden and water in a bowl)

Blessing of the Seed

Leader: God you have given us seeds of all kinds

All: **They have a past. They are the fruit of the past. They have a present. They are to be planted into the soil. They have a future. They are to bear fruit for the harvest. May the miracle of life within these seeds burst forth yielding a bountiful harvest. Lord we ask you to bless these seeds and those who plant them.**

Blessing of the Soil

Leader : God you have created and given us good soil.

All: **The soil serves as the medium for the seed to grow, it cleans water, it regulates climate, it provides warmth, nourishment and support so that new life may emerge. Lord we ask you to bless the soil that it may feed and nourish the seed. Bless those who work the soil and harvest the produce.**

Blessing of the Water

Leader: God, water is your creation.

All: **Water gives sustenance and nourishment to the soil and the seed. Lord, bless the soil and the seed with gentle rain. Let it come as rain at the right time, in the proper amount so that the seed may flourish and grow. In your mercy send us favorable weather so that the harvest will be bountiful.**

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