

CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

Good Friday

This is a celebration of the Word to aid your worship this Friday, alone or with family. If possible, place a simple cross or crucifix prominently in the room and light one or more candles. As a family, choose the one who leads the prayer, and someone to do the readings.

Whoever leads the prayer can say:

On this Good Friday, we observe the Passion of the Lord in a way that we would not have expected. The world and our nation suffer greatly, under the threat of sickness and death. But we unite ourselves to Jesus on the cross, trusting that by his death he has redeemed our death. Therefore, as Saint Augustine said, “Let us admire, congratulate, rejoice, love, praise, adore; because through the death of our Redeemer we are called from darkness to light, from death to life, from exile to home, from grief to everlasting joy.” And as Saint Bernard of Clairvaux said, “Who is the one that is not filled with hope of obtaining confidence and courage when he gazes trustfully on the position of our Lord’s crucified body? His head is bent to give us the kiss of peace, his arms extended to receive us, his hands pierced to pour his blessings upon us, his heart opened to love us, his feet nailed to the cross to soften our hearts and remain with us.” Jesus, we look to you on the cross. Open your heart to us, and pour out your mercy upon us and upon our world.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

After a moment of silence, let everyone begin by making the Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

HYMN

Choose an appropriate hymn.

We place ourselves before the Lord, beginning with an act of contrition:

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

The following are the readings of Good Friday.

He himself was wounded for our sins. (Fourth oracle of the Servant of the Lord)

**A reading from
the Book of the Prophet Isaiah**

52:13–53:12

SEE, MY SERVANT shall prosper,/ he shall be raised high and greatly exalted./ Even as many were amazed at him—/ so marred was his look beyond human semblance/ and his appearance beyond that of the sons of man—/ so shall he startle many nations,/ because of him kings shall stand speechless;/ for those who have not been told shall see,/ those who have not heard shall ponder it.

Who would believe what we have heard?/ To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?/ He grew up like a sapling before him,/ like a shoot from the parched earth;/ there was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him,/ nor appearance that would attract us to him./ He was spurned and avoided by people,/ a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity,/ one of those from whom people hide their faces,/ spurned, and we held him in no esteem.

Yet it was our infirmities that he bore,/ our sufferings that he endured,/ while we thought of him as stricken,/ as one smitten by God and afflicted./ But he was pierced for our offenses,/ crushed for our sins;/ upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole,/ by his stripes we were healed./ We had all gone astray like sheep,/ each following his own way;/ but the LORD laid upon him/ the guilt of us all.

Though he was harshly treated, he submitted/ and opened not his mouth;/ like a lamb led to the slaughter/ or a sheep before the shearers,/ he was silent and opened not his mouth./ Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away,/ and who would have thought any more of his destiny?/ When he was cut off from the land of the living,/ and smitten for the sin of his people,/ a grave was assigned him among the wicked/ and a burial place with evildoers,/ though he had done no wrong/ nor spoken any falsehood./ But the LORD was pleased/ to crush him in infirmity.

If he gives his life as an offering for sin,/ he shall see his descendants in a long life,/ and the will of the LORD shall be accomplished through him.

Because of his affliction/ he shall see the light in fullness of days;/ through his suffering, my servant shall justify many,/ and their guilt he shall bear./ Therefore I will give him his portion among the great,/ and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty,/ because he surrendered himself to death/ and was counted among the wicked;/ and he shall take away the sins of many,/ and win pardon for their offenses.

The word of the Lord.

—**PSALM 31**—

R/ (Lk 23:46) Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

In you, O LORD, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame.
In your justice rescue me.
Into your hands I commend my spirit;
you will redeem me, O LORD, O faithful God. *R/*

For all my foes I am an object of reproach,
a laughingstock to my neighbors, and a dread to my friends;
they who see me abroad flee from me.
I am forgotten like the unremembered dead;
I am like a dish that is broken. *R/*

But my trust is in you, O LORD;
I say, "You are my God.
In your hands is my destiny; rescue me
from the clutches of my enemies and my
persecutors." *R/*

Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your kindness.
Take courage and be stouthearted,
all you who hope in the LORD. *R/*

Jesus learned obedience and became the source of salvation for all who obey him.

**A reading from
the Letter to the Hebrews**

4:14-16; 5:7-9

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.

In the days when Christ was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.
The word of the Lord.

VERSE BEFORE THE GOSPEL

Christ became obedient to the point of death,/ even death on a cross./ Because of this, God greatly exalted him/ and bestowed on him the name which is above every other name.

✠: *Christ*; **N**: *Narrator*; **V**: *Voice*; **C**: *Crowd*.

N Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. Judas his betrayer also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas got a band of soldiers and guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees and went there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and said to them,

✠ “Whom are you looking for?”

N They answered him,

C “Jesus the Nazorean.”

N He said to them,

✠ “I AM.”

N Judas his betrayer was also with them. When he said to them, “I AM,” they turned away and fell to the ground. So he again asked them,

✠ “Whom are you looking for?”

N They said,

C “Jesus the Nazorean.”

N Jesus answered,

✠ “I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.”

N This was to fulfill what he had said, “I have not lost any of those 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 into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?”

N So the band of soldiers, the tribune, and the Jewish guards seized Jesus, bound him, and brought him to Annas first. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had counseled the Jews that it was better that one man should die rather than the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Now the other disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered the courtyard of the high priest with Jesus. But Peter stood at the gate outside. So the other disciple, the acquaintance of the high priest, went out and spoke to the gatekeeper and brought Peter in. Then the maid who was the gatekeeper said to Peter,

V “You are not one of this man’s disciples, are you?”

N He said,

V “I am not.”

N Now the slaves and the guards were standing around a charcoal fire that they had made, because it was cold, and were warming themselves. Peter was also standing there keeping warm.

The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his doctrine. Jesus answered him,

✘ “I have spoken publicly to the world. I have always taught in a synagogue or in the temple area where all the Jews gather, and in secret I have said nothing. Why ask me? Ask those who heard me what I said to them. They know what I said.”

N When he had said this, one of the temple guards standing there struck Jesus and said,

V “Is this the way you answer the high priest?”

N Jesus answered him,

✘ “If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?”

N Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing there keeping warm. And they said to him,

C “You are not one of his disciples, are you?”

N He denied it and said,

V “I am not.”

N One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, said,

V “Didn’t I see you in the garden with him?”

N Again Peter denied it. And immediately the cock crowed.

Then they brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium. It was morning. And they themselves did not enter the praetorium, in order not to be defiled so that they could eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and said,

V “What charge do you bring against this man?”

N They answered and said to him,

C “If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.”

N At this, Pilate said to them,

V “Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law.”

N The Jews answered him,

C “We do not have the right to execute anyone,”

N in order that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled that he said indicating the kind of death he would die. So Pilate went back into the praetorium and summoned Jesus and said to him,

V “Are you the King of the Jews?”

N Jesus answered,

✘ “Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?”

N Pilate answered,

V “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?”

N Jesus answered,

✘ “My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here.”

N So Pilate said to him,

V “Then you are a king?”

N Jesus answered,

✘ “You say 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.”

N Pilate said to him,

V “What is truth?”

N When he had said this, he again went out to the Jews and said to them,

V “I find no guilt in him. But you have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at Passover. Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”

N They cried out again,

C “Not this one but Barabbas!”

N Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said,

C “Hail, King of the Jews!”

N And they struck him repeatedly. Once more Pilate went out and said to them,

V “Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no guilt in him.”

N So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And Pilate said to them,

V “Behold, the man!”

N When the chief priests and the guards saw him they cried out,

C “Crucify him, crucify him!”

N Pilate said to them,

V “Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him.”

N The Jews answered,

C “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.”

N Now when Pilate heard this statement, he became even more afraid, and went back into the praetorium and said to Jesus,

V “Where are you from?”

N Jesus did not answer him. So Pilate said to him,

V “Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?”

N Jesus answered him,

✘ “You would have no power over me if it had not been given to you from above. For this reason the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.”

N Consequently, Pilate tried to release him; but the Jews cried out,

C “If you release him, you are not a Friend of Caesar. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.”

N When Pilate heard these words he brought Jesus out and seated him on the judge’s bench in the place called Stone Pavement, in Hebrew, Gabbatha. It was preparation day for Passover, and it was about noon. And he said to the Jews,

V “Behold, your king!”

N They cried out,

C “Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!”

N Pilate said to them,

V “Shall I crucify your king?”

N The chief priests answered,

C “We have no king but Caesar.”

N Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus, and, carrying the cross himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews.” Now many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate,

C “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that he said, ‘I am the King of the Jews.’”

N Pilate answered,

V “What I have written, I have written.”

N When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. So they said to one another,
C “Let’s not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be,”

N in order that the passage of Scripture might be fulfilled that says: / *They divided my garments among them, / and for my vesture they cast lots.*

This is what the soldiers did. Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved he said to his mother,

✘ “Woman, behold, your son.”

N Then he said to the disciple,

✘ “Behold, your mother.”

N And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said,

✘ “I thirst.”

N There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said,

✘ “It is finished.”

N And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

Here all kneel and pause for a short time.

N Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and that they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may come to believe. For this happened so that the Scripture passage might be fulfilled: / *Not a bone of it will be broken.* / And again another passage says: / *They will look upon him whom they have pierced.*

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no

one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by.

The Gospel of the Lord.”

Pray now in silence for a few minutes, meditating on the Passion of our Lord and his great love for us.

THE ADORATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Antiphon

We adore your Cross, O Lord,
we praise and glorify your holy Resurrection,
for behold, because of the wood of a tree
joy has come to the whole world.

May God have mercy on us and bless us;
may he let his face shed its light upon us
and have mercy on us.

Cf. Ps 67 (66):2

Antiphon: We adore....

If you have a cross or crucifix present, make some act of reverence for the cross, such as bowing, genuflecting, or by kissing the cross.

The following hymn, or another suitable one, can be recited or sung.

All:

Faithful Cross the Saints rely on,
Noble tree beyond compare!
Never was there such a scion,
Never leaf or flower so rare.
Sweet the timber, sweet the iron,
Sweet the burden that they bear!

Cantors:

Sing, my tongue, in exultation
Of our banner and device!
Make a solemn proclamation
Of a triumph and its price:
How the Savior of creation
Conquered by his sacrifice!

All:

Faithful Cross the Saints rely on,
Noble tree beyond compare!
Never was there such a scion,
Never leaf or flower so rare.

Cantors:

For, when Adam first offended,
Eating that forbidden fruit,
Not all hopes of glory ended
With the serpent at the root:
Broken nature would be mended
By a second tree and shoot.

All:

Sweet the timber, sweet the iron,
Sweet the burden that they bear!

Cantors:

Thus the tempter was outwitted
By a wisdom deeper still:
Remedy and ailment fitted,
Means to cure and means to kill;
That the world might be acquitted,
Christ would do his Father's will.

All:

Faithful Cross the Saints rely on,
Noble tree beyond compare!
Never was there such a scion,
Never leaf or flower so rare.

Cantors:

So the Father, out of pity
For our self-inflicted doom,
Sent him from the heavenly city
When the holy time had come:
He, the Son and the Almighty,
Took our flesh in Mary's womb.

All:

Sweet the timber, sweet the iron,
Sweet the burden that they bear!

Cantors:

Hear a tiny baby crying,
Founder of the seas and strands;
See his virgin Mother tying
Cloth around his feet and hands;
Find him in a manger lying
Tightly wrapped in swaddling-bands!

All:

Faithful Cross the Saints rely on,
Noble tree beyond compare!

Never was there such a scion,
Never leaf or flower so rare.

Cantors:

So he came, the long-expected,
Not in glory, not to reign;
Only born to be rejected,
Choosing hunger, toil and pain,
Till the scaffold was erected
And the Paschal Lamb was slain.

All:

Sweet the timber, sweet the iron,
Sweet the burden that they bear!

Cantors:

No disgrace was too abhorrent:
Nailed and mocked and parched he died;
Blood and water, double warrant,
Issue from his wounded side,
Washing in a mighty torrent
Earth and stars and oecumene.

All:

Faithful Cross the Saints rely on,
Noble tree beyond compare!
Never was there such a scion,
Never leaf or flower so rare.

Cantors:

Lofty timber, smooth your roughness,
Flex your boughs for blossoming;
Let your fibers lose their toughness,
Gently let your tendrils cling;
Lay aside your native gruffness,
Clasp the body of your King!

All:

Sweet the timber, sweet the iron,
Sweet the burden that they bear!

Cantors:

Noblest tree of all created,
Richly jeweled and embossed:
Post by Lamb's blood consecrated;
Spar that saves the tempest-tossed;
Scaffold-beam which, elevated,
Carries what the world has cost!

All:

Faithful Cross the Saints rely on,
Noble tree beyond compare!
Never was there such a scion,
Never leaf or flower so rare.

The following conclusion is never to be omitted:

All:

Wisdom, power, and adoration
To the blessed Trinity
For redemption and salvation
Through the Paschal Mystery,
Now, in every generation,
And for all eternity. Amen.

M E D I T A T I O N O F T H E D A Y

It Is Finished

The evening light begins to glimmer again upon Calvary, the three crosses, and the little group that waits for the end; and as it falls upon the Face of Christ, the look of agony is gone.... Now in that face and the eyes, sunken with sorrow, a new look begins, that rises, as those who stand by watch him, until the whole face is radiant once again. The breaths come fuller and fuller, the body nailed by its extremities begins to lift itself higher and higher till strength is regained sufficient for him not to speak only, but to utter a cry so loud and triumphant as to startle and amaze the officer who has watched many men die, but never as this man dies. The cry peals out, like the shout of a king in the moment of victory; and, in an instant, failure and labor and bitterness are behind him forever. *Consummatum est, It is finished!*

Christ came into the world to accomplish the greatest work of all—greater than that sheer act of the divine will by which all things came into being out of nothing.... That God should make man is an act of power; but to redeem him is an act of Love. The whole of history up to Calvary is, looked at from one side, one ceaseless effort of preparation for Redemption. Not one lamb has shed his blood in vain, not one prophet has spoken, not one king has reigned, except as a link in that chain of which the Lamb of God, the Servant of the Lord, and the King of Kings, is the end and the climax that justifies the whole. Abraham saw his day, and was glad; David sang of the day of his birth and of his wounded hands and feet; Isaiah spoke of his grave with the wicked and his resting-place in the rich man's garden. God has brought all up to this point that crowns and fulfils them all. And now, *Consummatum est.*

Again, as we look back to Calvary through two thousand years, we see that all that God has done since takes its rise from there; that every impulse of grace, every sacrifice and prayer offered, every movement of the Spirit of God, every response from the spirits of men, every sin forgiven, every new life begun, every death of a righteous man, every birth of a new soul into innocence—all these gain their full strength and indeed their very existence from the torrent of love that burst up into being at the foot of Christ's cross.

MONSIGNOR ROBERT HUGH BENSON

Monsignor Benson († 1914) was a British convert to Catholicism who is best known for his novels about the faith.

INTERCESSIONS

The leader can begin with these words:

Before the crucified love of God, we bow in wonder and we pray:

R Holy, immortal one, have mercy on us.

For the Church:

– grant us perseverance in faith: Let us pray to the Lord. **R**

For our holy father:

– protect and guide him in his service to the Gospel: Let us pray to the Lord. **R**

For all bishops, priests, and deacons:

– make them holy guides for all your people: Let us pray to the Lord. **R**

For those preparing for baptism and the profession of faith:

– enliven them with love: Let us pray to the Lord. **R**

For all those who believe in Jesus Christ:

– unite us in faith and love: Let us pray to the Lord. **R**

For the Jewish people, first to hear the Word of God:

– bring them to the fullness of redemption: Let us pray to the Lord. **R**

For those who do not believe in Christ:

– lead them to the truth: Let us pray to the Lord. **R**

For those who do not believe in God:

– grant that all may find you: Let us pray to the Lord. **R**

For all who serve in public office:

– grant them wisdom and compassion: Let us pray to the Lord. **R**

For all who are in need:

– hear the prayers of all who call upon you: Let us pray to the Lord. **R**

Personal intentions

Our Father....

An Act of Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.

May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and lead us to everlasting life. And may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.

The conclusion of this prayer service should be in silence. Perhaps by remaining in silent prayer and meditation for a few minutes.

MARIAN ANTIPHON

7. 

SUB tú-um præsí-di-um confúgimus, * sáncta
Dé-i Génitrix: nóstras depre-ca-ti-ónes ne despíci-as
in ne-ces-si-tá-tibus : sed a per-í-cu-lis cúntis líbe-ra
nos sem-per, Vírgo glo-ri-ó-sa et be-ne-díc-ta.

Under your protection we take refuge,
O holy Mother of God:
do not despise our supplications in time of need,
but free us from all dangers,
O Virgin ever-blessed.

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