

Lenten Prayer Guide 6

For the week starting April 5, 2020

Palm Sunday

Show Us Light in the Shadows

Scripture: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29;

Matthew 21:1-11; Philipians 2:5-11

Call to Prayer

The story of Holy Week is a roller coaster of intense emotions and experiences. The

triumphal entry into Jerusalem is a high point for celebration and hope. But the cleansing of the temple begins the downward slope, gathering speed toward Jesus's confrontation with the religious and political powers of his day. The story hits bottom with the intense suffering and despair of Jesus' trial and crucifixion, only to reach an even higher point of triumph and joy in the resurrection stories. In Holy Week we hold grieving and sorrow alongside celebration and joy.

Opening Prayer: Become quiet before God. Light a candle. Say the first phrase of the breath prayer as you inhale, and the second as you exhale. Repeat as the Spirit leads you.

O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good;

God's steadfast love endures forever! (Ps. 118:1,29)

Meditative Reading

Read Matthew 21:1-11. Place yourself in the crowd. Use all of your senses. Who are you in that crowd? As the procession reaches you it stops and you have a chance to speak to Jesus. What do you say? What does he say?

For Reflection

In the same week Jesus is both celebrated and ridiculed. He endures unimaginable suffering and the full joy of resurrection. We recognize that our lives are a mix of suffering and joy. How does Jesus's suffering relate to your pain? How has suffering birthed new life in your experience?

Praying with Scripture

Brian McLaren writes that even when everything crumbles, "God can raise something beautiful from the rubble. The end is not the end. It's actually the doorway to a new beginning". (*The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World's Largest Religion is Seeking a Better Way to be Christian*, p. 28) Read Philipians 2:5-11. The first part is about brokenness, loss and despair. It involves emptying and letting go. Bring to God whatever feels broken, sad and hopeless from your experience. Share your feelings with God. Invite God to show you what you might need to release. The second part is about honouring and celebrating Jesus's resurrection. Invite God to redeem the broken pieces from your experience and show you where new hope and joy are possible.



Praying Through Your Life

Quiet yourself. Take time to reflect back on your day (week, month, or season). Notice the times when you were close and connected to God, and experienced peace and joy. Offer thanks for those times. Notice the times when you were distant and disconnected from God, and experienced disorientation and sadness. Name those times, not for judgment, but to bring them before God. Invite God's mercy, healing and forgiveness, trusting that God can bring wholeness out of brokenness.

Praying with Music

Listen to, sing, play or read the lyrics of any music that has been stirring in your heart, or choose songs from the list below.

Hymnal: A Worship Book #239 Ride on, ride on in majesty
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-qDQSjnzH8>

Sing the Journey #105 Don't be afraid
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZT4KgyDOtw>

Sing the Story #115 Beauty for brokenness
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08utbDFP9AE>

Grace by Rose Cousins
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXdT6FblviY>

Praying for our World

Gather coloured pencils or thin markers. (You do not need to be a good artist to do this!) In the middle of a blank page, draw something that represents God's steadfast love--a heart, a candle, the cross or a name or image of God. Who or what situations especially need to experience God's steadfast love? Maybe you are anxious about the Covid-19 pandemic, know someone who is struggling, or are concerned for those on the margins of society. Bring them into God's presence by writing the names or situations around the rest of your page. Draw, doodle and colour around each name as a way of holding them in God's care. As you draw, keep repeating the phrase from Psalm 118, "God's steadfast love endures forever."

Closing Prayer

Grant me the wisdom and courage to hold both the suffering and the joy of Holy Week. I celebrate the power of your love to reconcile and transform. May your healing and hope wash over me and flow through me.

Extinguish the candle and carry God's light within you.

I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. (Psalm 118: 21-23)