



AT HOME IN HOLY WEEK RETREAT

Spending time with the God Who Speaks

WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

FROM MORNING PRAYER – PSALM 76(77)

"We are in difficulties on ever side, but never consumed" (2 Cor 4: 8)

In the day of distress I sought the Lord with outstretched arms.

I cry aloud to God,
cry aloud to God that he may hear me.

In the day of my distress I sought the Lord.
My hands were raised at night without ceasing;
my soul refused to be consoled.
I remembered my God and I groaned.
I pondered and my spirit fainted.

You withheld sleep from my eyes.
I was troubled, I could not speak.
I thought of the days of long ago
and remembered the years long past.
At night I mused within my heart.
I pondered and my spirit questioned.

"Will the Lord reject us for ever?
Will he show us his favour no more?
Has his love vanished for ever?
Has his promise come to an end?
Does God forget his mercy
or in anger withhold his compassion?"

I said: "This is what causes my grief;
that the way of the Most High has changed."
I remember the deeds of the Lord,
I remember your wonders of old,
I muse on all your works
and ponder your mighty deeds.

In the day of distress I sought the Lord with outstretched arms.

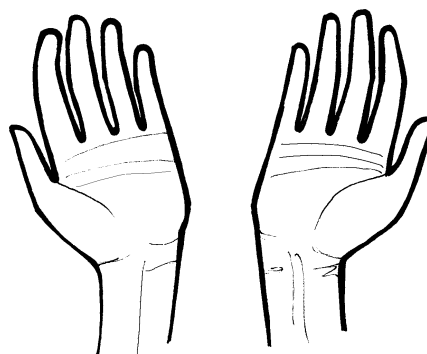
Intercessions – praying for those in need today.
Our Father...

Your ways, O God, are holy.
What god is great as our God?
You are the God who works wonders.
You showed your power among the peoples.
Your strong arm redeemed your people,
the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

The waters saw you, O God,
the waters saw you and trembled;
the depths were moved with terror.
The clouds poured down rain,
the skies sent forth their voice;
your arrows flashed to and fro.

Your thunder rolled round the sky,
your flashes lighted up the world.
The earth was moved and trembled
when your way led through the sea,
your path through the mighty waters
and no one saw your footprints.

You guided your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.



FIRST READING OF THE DAY – ISAIAH 40: 4-9

The Lord has given me
a disciple's tongue.
So that I may know how to reply to the wearied
he provides me with speech.
Each morning he wakes me to hear,
to listen like a disciple.
The Lord has opened my ear.

For my part, I made no resistance,
neither did I turn away.
I offered my back to those who struck me,
my cheeks to those who tore at my beard;
I did not cover my face
against insult and spittle.

The Lord comes to my help,
so that I am untouched by the insults.
So, too, I set my face like flint;
I know I shall not be shamed.

My vindicator is here at hand. Does anyone start proceedings against me?
Then let us go to court together.
Who thinks he has a case against me?
Let him approach me.

The Lord is coming to my help,
who dare condemn me?



This is a hard reading but faces up to the reality that a disciple's life is not always easy or happy. It has many challenges. During this time of pandemic, some people are angry – very angry. Quite often, they cannot say what they are angry about – it is just too deep. They are angry with a virus – but know that does not make sense. They are angry at the massive disruption to their lives. They are angry with a God who lets this happen. And their anger is often directed at those trying to help – people who share their anger and utter dismay but who are trying to make sense of it and support others through it. The words that they try to say are faltering and can sound like platitudes – but always God is trying to speak through his people – those who will listen deeply and whose words come from that deep place of knowing God's unfailing love in the bleakest of times and places.

- Read the passage slowly – as if hearing the words spoken through Isaiah being spoken directly to you.
- Which word or phrase seems to speak most deeply to you? Jot them down – or repeat them several times to memorise them.
- How can I learn to listen more deeply to God so that I develop a disciple's tongue – to find those words that flow out to the wearied and the angry during these difficult and exhausting days?
- Use your word or phrase as a mantra as you go through the morning.

NOON – THE ANGELUS



The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,
and she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary...

Behold the handmaid of the Lord,
Be it done unto me according to your word.

Hail Mary...

And the Word was made flesh,
and dwelt amongst us.

Hail Mary...

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an angel, may, by his Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.

Through the same Christ our Lord, Amen

Intercessions – praying for those in need today.

Our Father

THE GOSPEL OF THE DAY – MATTHEW 26:14-25

One of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?' They paid him thirty silver pieces, and from that moment he looked for an opportunity to betray him. Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus to say, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the passover?' 'Go to so-and-so in the city' he replied 'and say to him, "The Master says: My time is near. It is at your house that I am keeping Passover with my disciples."' 'The disciples did what Jesus told them and prepared the Passover.

When evening came he was at table with the twelve disciples. And while they were eating he said, 'I tell you solemnly, one of you is about to betray me.' They were greatly distressed and started asking him in turn, 'Not I, Lord, surely?' He answered, 'Someone who has dipped his hand into the dish with me, will betray me.

The Son of Man is going to his fate, as the scriptures say he will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Better for that man if he had never been born!' Judas, who was to betray him, asked in his turn, 'Not I, Rabbi surely?' 'They are your own words' answered Jesus.

- Spend a few minutes pondering what is happening in this Gospel? Jesus knows that things are about to fall apart – but the disciples are in denial. One has already acted – but cannot admit it? Why is Judas even at the table?
- Even knowing what is to come, Jesus still marks the Passover. Even knowing that he has begun his betrayal, Judas comes to eat with the others. Even suspecting that when it comes to it, they will all go on to fail Jesus, the disciples maintain the routine. How are you trying to maintain a routine as life as we knew it seems to fall apart? How does this help? How does it hinder facing what we need to?
- How can we hold on to hope when much that we knew and treasured is taken from us?

REVIEW OF THE DAY

When have you been aware of God during the day?

Which of God's words have carried you through today? Thank God for them.

When you sensed that your work – your care of others – has felt like serving the Lord?

When have you made selfish choices that have crushed or hurt others? Ask God for forgiveness and ideas on how to put things right.

Join in the prayer that will enfold the world tonight...

NIGHT PRAYER OF THE CHURCH - COMPLINE

O God, come to our aid.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,

world without end.

Amen.

Psalm 30 (31) Trustful prayer in time of adversity

"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23: 46)

O God, be my protector and my refuge.

In you, O Lord, I take refuge.

Let me never be put to shame.

In your justice, set me free,

hear me and speedily rescue me.

Be a rock of refuge for me,

a mighty stronghold to save me,

for you are my rock, my stronghold.

For your name's sake, lead me and guide me.

Release me from the snares they have hidden
for you are my refuge, Lord.

Into your hands I commend my spirit.

It is you who will redeem me, Lord.

O God, be my protector and my refuge.

Psalm 129 (130) Out of the Depths

"He will save his people from their sins" (Matt 1: 21)

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,

Lord, hear my voice!

O let your ears be attentive

to the voice of my pleading.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,

Lord, who would survive?

But with you is found forgiveness:

for this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord,

I count on his word.

My soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchman for daybreak.
(Let the watchman count on daybreak
and Israel on the Lord.)

Because with the Lord there is mercy
and fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem
from all its iniquity.

Short Reading –Ephesians 4: 26-27

Do not let resentment lead you into sin; the sunset must not find you still angry. Do not give the devil his opportunity.

Short Responsory

Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.
– *Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.*
You have redeemed us, Lord God of truth.
– *Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.*
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
– *Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.*

Canticle - Nunc Dimittis

Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace.

At last, all-powerful Master,
you give leave to your servant go in peace.
according to your promise.

For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the sight of all nations,
the light to enlighten the Gentiles
and give glory to Israel, your people.
Glory be ...

Save us, Lord, while we are awake; protect us while we sleep; that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him in peace.

Lord Jesus Christ,
meek and humble of heart,
you offer to those who follow you
a yoke that is good to bear,
a burden that is light.
Accept, we beg you, our prayer and work of this day,
and grant us the rest we need
that we may be ever more willing to serve you,
who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

Marian Anthem
Ave Regina Caelorum

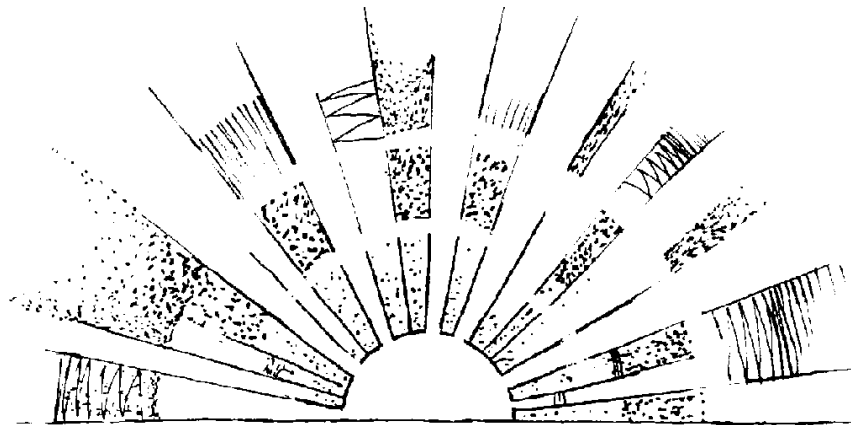
Hail, Queen of the heavens,
hail, Lady of the angels.
Root of our salvation
and our gateway to heaven,
the light of the world was born to you.
Be joyful, Virgin of glory,
most beautiful of all in heaven.
We greet you now, true beauty –
pray for us to Christ.

Ave, Regína cælórum,
ave, Dómina angelórum,
salve, radix, salve, porta,
ex qua mundo lux est orta.
Gaude, Virgo gloriósa,
super omnes speciósa;
vale, o valde decóra,
et pro nobis Christum exóra.

Intercessions – praying for those in need tonight.

Prayer of St Augustine

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake,
or watch, or weep tonight,
and give your angels and saints
charge over those who sleep.
Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ.
Rest your weary ones.
Bless your dying ones.
Soothe your suffering ones.
Pity your afflicted ones.
Shield your joyous ones,
and all for your love's sake. Amen.



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