

St Michael and All Angel's, Colehill

Poems, Prayers And Thoughts for Lent & Holy Week



Lent General

Ash Wednesday

“Prayer begins by listening, God speaks in the silence of your hearts and we speak from the fullness of our hearts. I listen, God speaks. I speak, God listens. This listening, speaking is prayer.”

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Mother Teresa’s words remind us that God actually listens to us. This Lent, let us try to put her words into practice. Although our lives are busy, We can still seek a time of silence each day to pause, ponder, and pray.

Donna Maria Cooper O’Boyle – Bringing Lent Home with Mother Teresa – Ave Maria Press

“Be kind and merciful. Let no one ever come
Without coming away better and happier.”

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

A Story from Mother Teresa’s Life

Mother Teresa told a story about a little girl she taught when she was at the Loreto School. She said the six year—old girl was naughty and seemed very selfish. One day when the girl was being extremely naughty, Mother Teresa decided to take her by the hand and go for a walk with her. Mother Teresa said the girl held onto her hand with one hand and she tightly held her money in her other hand, all the while saying that she wanted to buy this or that.

They never did go to a store. Instead, they came upon a blind beggar and immediately the little girl let open her grasp of the money, putting it into the beggar’s hands. Mother Teresa said the experience completely changed the girl who from that day forward was kind, obedient, and loving.

Donna Maria Cooper O’Boyle – Bringing Lent Home with Mother Teresa – Ave Maria Press

First Sunday of Lent

Like a kitten
My temptations do not come
like a prowling lion
seeking to devour me;
no:
like a kitten,
they curl up in my lap
purring me to complacency.
My desert experience
is not somewhere
'out there' ~
it is shuffling papers
at my desk;
dumping another load
of dirty jeans
into the machine;
commuting in my car,
listening to my angry voice
at the drivers around me
echo the ones on the radio.
The Evil One
is too smart to come to me
in a Halloween costume
but comes
in the neighbour
a couple of doors down
who fears the way life is changing;
in the knot of teenagers
walking down the street towards me
in any person, in every person,
who is not my child, my spouse, me.
Tempted One:
strengthen me with your word,
feed me with the sweetness of your grace
shelter me in the coolness of your love;
then, together,
we can journey to Jerusalem.

*Thom M Shuman – Wild Goose Big Book of Worship Resources – Wild
Goose Publications``*

And that will be Heaven

And that will be heaven
and that will be heaven
at last the first unclouded
seeing
to stand like the sunflower
turned full face to the sun drenched
with light in the still centre
held while the circling planets
hum with an utter joy
seeing and knowing
at last in every particle
seen and known and not turning
away
never turning away
again
Evangeline Paterson

The French word for the sunflower, tournesol, explicitly highlights what this dramatic plant actually does during the day when it is in bloom: it literally turns around to present its face to wherever the sun is in the sky. At the same time, the sun-like shape of the flower head makes it seem as if the sunflower has taken on the very countenance of the thing it lives by and seems to worship.

Throughout our lives, we inevitably go through a pattern of being distracted and turning away from God and then consciously, as in Lent, turning aside to try to approach and gaze at God once more.

Spend time in silence, with your heart turned “full face to the sun”

The heart's time – Janet Morley - SPCK

Meditation - John the Baptist

What was he doing, going off into the wilderness like that?
I'd baptised him just moments earlier,
seen God's blessing rest upon him —
confirmation, if any were needed, that he was the one sent from God
the Messiah for whom we longed —
and I'd expected him to hit the ground running:
to rally support,
energise the crowds,
lay claim at once to his throne.
But instead, he disappeared,
heading off into the hills,
and no sight or sound of him for weeks to come.
Was he having second thoughts, I wondered?
Was the job too much for him?
Or had I simply misunderstood my man?
I watched . . .
and I waited . . .
torn between a mixture of dread and hope,
until, at last, word came that he was healing the sick,
saving the lost,
proclaiming the dawn of God's kingdom.
Suddenly I understood.
He'd needed to experience the wasteland of temptation
before he was ready to transform the desert of human life
He'd faced the stark choice of self or others,
of taking the easy or hard way,
and he'd resolved to give his all.
Quite simply, but wonderfully,
he'd entered the wilderness to lead us out!
Nick Fawcett - Light Shines - Kevin Mayhew

Meditation – Mary, Mother of Jesus

He looked awful,
absolutely drained.
And it's hardly surprising, is it?
Forty days out in the wilderness is hell enough for anyone,
but without food — I ask you?
He was lucky to be alive!
Barely was, mind you, when he came staggering back into Nazareth,
gaunt and starving!
'Why did you do it?' I asked him.
'What got into you?'
And all he could say was that he had to,
that everything depended on it.
He was changed afterwards.
I used to joke that the sun had got to him.
But it wasn't the sun, of course,
It was much more than that.
He wrestled out there,
with himself,
with the world,
with all the forces of evil,
and in some way I don't quite understand,
he won.
It had cost him, though.
He'd had to make painful choices,
confronting life at its darkest
and wrestling with who he was and why he was here.
But he came back stronger,
more certain and determined.
Not that it was plain sailing from then on,
don't make that mistake.
He had to battle like you and I,
harder if anything,
for the path he took was so much more demanding
Oh no, he endured temptation all right,
as real as any we might face.
The difference is, he overcame it,
right to the end.
That's what made him so special.
That's why people follow him, even now!
Nick Fawcett - Light Shines - Kevin Mayhew

Meditation - A Rabbi

Which am I, I wondered:
the Pharisee, or the tax—collector?
I'm neither, of course
not literally,
but that wasn't the point was it?
'Which of the two do I most resemble?'
that's what I found myself asking,
and I had a shrewd suspicion I wouldn't much like the answer
So it proved,
though perhaps not quite as I feared,
for, in actual fact — like most of us, I suspect — I'm a bit of both,
neither all of one nor all of the other.
There are times when I'm the tax—collector —
overwhelmed by a sense of failure,
able only to throw myself on God's goodness,
knowing I have no claim on his love
nor any reason to expect mercy.
And at those times, just as Jesus said, I find a sense of peace,
a feeling of being put right with God —
my sins forgiven,
the past absolved,
mistakes over and done with.
Only it never lasts,
for there's always that other self refusing to be silenced
the Pharisee within me straining to break free —
prim, proper, self—righteous,
head shaking in disapproval,
finger pointing in accusation,
so certain I am right and others are wrong.
Can they both be me,
each part of the same person?
I'm afraid they are, much though it hurts to admit it.
But at least it does hurt, that's something,
for so long as I can still see the truth,
still see myself as I really am,
and still feel a sense of shame,
then all is not lost —
there's hope for me even yet.
So I'm here, Lord,
the two of me together,

tax-collector and Pharisee,
and my prayer is simply this:
'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'
Nick Fawcett - Light Shines - Kevin Mayhew

Meditation - Martha

Don't feel sorry for me,
as if I was harshly judged,
unfairly treated,
for I wasn't,
not in the slightest.
Yes, there were jobs to be done —
the meal to prepare for a start —
but Jesus was in no hurry,
and neither should I have been.
The daft thing is it was me who invited him round,
not Mary;
I the one initially who recognised a gap in our lives
that Jesus alone could fill.
But I allowed myself to get distracted,
led into a blind alley by tasks that,
though worthy enough in themselves,
finally counted for nothing.
Not that Jesus minded, even then.
He knew I meant well and would listen eventually.
It was my complaints that stirred a response:
my seeking to land Mary in it,
as though she were at fault and I virtuous,
when the true error was mine.
He rebuked me for that,
if you can call it a rebuke,
but his words were patient, gentle,
explaining rather than condemning,
inviting me to pause and think again.
I'm learning to do that, slowly,
making time to stop and stare, relax and reflect,
and I've found true rest in doing so,
not just for the body but for the soul.
It doesn't come easy to me,
for I'm the fussing sort,
always on tenterhooks,

but Jesus taught me a vital lesson that day:
there's a difference between what seems to matter
and what really does.

Prayer

Teach us, Lord, that, however busy we are,
however frenetic our lifestyle,
we need time to ponder,
time for you.

Forgive us that that we relegate you to the margins of our lives,
believing we have more important things to do,
more pressing concerns to see to.

Remind us that you have the words of eternal life,
the answer to our inner hunger and true needs,
and so, in our list of daily priorities,
help us to put you first,
not last.

Amen.

Nick Fawcett - Light Shines - Kevin Mayhew

Whatsoever You Do

Hands at work,
outstretched to welcome, comfort,
heal, draw in.

Each gesture speaking of Christ,
touching wounds and healing pain.

Each gesture touching Christ himself
hurting as we hurt,

feeling as we feel:

cold, hunger, thirst, loneliness, need.

Through each gesture

we are touched ourselves.

Christ reaches out,
made flesh through human kindness.

'This is my body' —

these broken bodies,

these damaged lives.

'This is my body' —

these simple gestures

of humble service.

'This is my body' —

bread of compassion,
broken for you,
cup of hospitality offered to you.
'Do this in memory of me,'
and never forget,
I have no hands but yours,
no eyes or ears,
no loving heart on earth but yours.
Wherever two or three are gathered
in my name,
I am there.
Whatsoever you do
to the least of these...
mine is the body you touch,
mine the hands reaching out.

Gemma Simmonds – Glimpses of the Divine – Pauline Books and Media

Covenant

My hands are empty
as I stand before you, O God.
My past is behind me,
gone beyond recall.
My present unsure,
my future unknown.
How can I be certain
that my life has been worthwhile?
How can I find you
and be sure of your will?
Within this emptiness you promise
a life fruitful as the countless stars.
All you ask is that I trust your promise,
that I take the risk of believing.
'Leave all that is safe and familiar,
dare to walk into the unknown...'
Where can I find such faith,
hope and courage?
You call me by name.
You offer a new homeland
for my heart.
My faith can even strengthen others
You open to me a future
full of blessing and hope.

With my open hands
and open heart
I feel vulnerable before you.
But the stars in the sky
are a sign
of your faithfulness.

Gemma Simmonds – The Closeness of God – Pauline Books and Media

Hidden Place

We wear many disguises:
suits for work,
uniforms of power,
habits and collars,
labels and badges,
roles and titles,
coats of many colours.
Is there a dreamer inside?
Is there a dwelling-place
in our hearts
where the God
who works in secret
can enter?
Do we dare to be naked
in our own inner room?
An invitation is offered
to go into that secret place:
off come the painful shoes,
the heavy clothes,
the tight hat.
A naked child again —
free to be me,
free to give expression
to all that is most precious.
Our hidden self grows strong,
planted and built on love,
rooted in God,
beyond all disguising.

Gemma Simmonds – The Closeness of God – Pauline Books and Media

Be Calm

Life at its most chaotic,
pressure at its worst.
The boat of our life adrift
on raging seas,
tossing us up and down
in terrifying storms.
But our efforts to save ourselves
come to grief.
No rudder to guide us,
oars breaking
as We pull against the tide.
We can't bail ourselves out.
Sinking beneath the waves of crisis,
we feel outraged.
'Where are you, God,
when we feel shipwrecked?
Don't you care that we are sinking?
Why won't you wake up
and do something?'
A voice of power
speaks above the storm:
'I made the sea and the sky.
I ride on the wings of the storm.
Why are you afraid?
Peace!
Be still, and know that I am God
Gemma Simmonds – The Closeness of God – Pauline Books and Media

This time and this place:

This time and this place:
Living God,
help us now.
Here is a time for us
to focus away from ourselves
and onto you.
Here is a place for us
to look away from our places
and look to yours.
Here is a community of your people,

called together
not by our common interest
but by your gracious word.
So,
in the quietness of this time
and of this place
and of this community,
help us to be open
to your Spirit.
Living God,
you are always
the God of surprises.
When we have thought to find you
only in a special time,
a special place,
you have asked us to look for you
in every time, every place.
When we have thought to confine you
to one special group of people,
or one particular creed or custom,
you have taught us
that you are to be found
amongst all people, everywhere.
So here,
in this special time and place,
and amongst this special people,
help us to celebrate once again
that because you are here, you are everywhere
all life is yours,
all the world your dwelling place,
every human heart
potentially your home.
Lord Jesus,
desert-dweller,
in this time of Lent,
we would accompany you.
If we have grown soft,
cushioning our lives with excuses,
expose us again
to the toughness of your way.
If We have grown. lazy,
cushioning our minds with easy shallow thoughts
expose us again

to the rigour of your truth.
If we have grown comfortable,
cushioning our living
with satisfaction and success,
expose us again
to the challenge of your life.
And as we walk,
God, be our way;
as we learn,
God, be our truth;
as we grow,
God, be our life.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen

John Harvey – Journeys in Community – Wild Goose Publications

I am Mary and I am Martha

Lord of earth and sky,
as Martha did
I welcome you into the house of my heart;
as Maw did
I welcome you into the home of my thoughts
In sen/ice,
in listening,
I welcome you.
Like Martha, I'm distracted:
so many calls on my time
I run here and there,
starting this and that,
never spending long enough,
giving people the impression
that I'm too busy for them.
Like Mary, I choose:
choose to slow down,
choose to sit at your feet,
choose to offer you
my ministry of listening.
Save me from feeling guilty
about the kitchens of the world:
the hot spots, the action areas
and help me to identify with your compassion
and your presence —
there as everywhere.

Welcomed and welcoming Christ,
may all sisters come together
into your presence
and together eat at your table
the meal you have prepared for us;
that from the kitchen of your suffering
a banquet may be prepared
for all to eat.

Kate McIlhagga - Dandelions and Thistles – Wild Goose Publications

The journey

A prayer for Lent

Let the praises of God
resound in this place
to the one who is timeless
from us who are caught
between yesterday and tomorrow:
To the one who is and will be
from us who are caught
between the darkness and the light.
Meet with us here, Redeemer Lord,
that we may offer you
praise on the Lenten journey.
Guide us to where your pain
is given for all, for our pardon and peace.
Wounded one, king of the sorrows,
Grant us your healing and wholeness.
Conqueror of death, bring us
to that majestic morning
when the tomb was seen to be bare,
your shroud but an empty shell,
your stone rolled away.
Spirit of flame that kindles hope,
Spirit of fierce renewal,
lead us in gladness and glee
with a dancing step
into the kingdom's promise.
Caught as we are between a time
to mourn and a time to dance
let the song begin:
let the trumpets of the resurrection

drown the still sad music
of our failures and defeats,
till all at the last shall be harvest
and your good purposes fulfilled.

David Ogston – Scots Worship – St Andrew Press

Silence

“We need silence to be alone with God, to speak to him, to listen to him, to ponder his words deep in our hearts. We need to be alone with God in silence to be renewed and to be transformed. Silence gives us a new outlook on life. In it we are filled with the grace of God himself, which makes us do all things with joy.”

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Reflection

Silence? Yes, silence. Mother Teresa’s suggestion of silence for prayer may seem impossible. Yet it is in the silence that we will hear God’s whispers to our souls. Instead of waiting for a perfectly still household where prayer would be easier, perhaps we should go down a bit deeper into our hearts when we pray. Perhaps we should take advantage of even the briefest moments of silence to raise our hearts to God in prayer. It is in the journey to the depths of our hearts in prayer that we will find the silence in which the Lord can speak.

Donna Maria Cooper O’Boyle – Bringing Lent Home with Mother Teresa – Ave Maria Press

Light and Joy

“Joy is love, the normal result of a heart burning with love. Our lamp will be burning with sacrifices made out of love if we have joy.”

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Reflection

Mother Teresa tells us that when our lamp burns with love it will be filled with joy. How is your lamp burning? Does it need more oil? You can refuel it with extra love and prayer.

A Story from Mother Teresa's Life

When visiting the poor in Australia, Mother Teresa came upon an elderly man who was living by himself in a cluttered and dirty

house. Mother Teresa asked if the sisters and she could visit him and clean his house and do his laundry. The man eventually accepted her kind offer.

Mother Teresa found an old oil lamp in his home that was covered with layers of dirt and cobwebs. She cleaned it off and asked the man Why he didn't light the lamp. He told her that there Was no reason to because no one had ever come to visit him. Mother Teresa asked him if he'd light it if the sisters came each day, and he said he absolutely would.

So, the sisters visited each day and went about their Work in the man's house in a joyful Way, smiling and humming. The sisters' loving hearts truly rekindled a lamp of love and joy in that man's life, which he responded to in a very happy and grateful way.

Donna Maria Cooper O'Boyle – Bringing Lent Home with Mother Teresa – Ave Maria Press

Prayer

On the road to Jerusalem, Jesus,
you have spoken again and again
of your end and new beginning
to disciples who do not or will not understand
Now you have entered the city
and you summon all who would follow you
to wait and watch with you.

Help us to enter into the intensity
of the week ahead of us
that we may truly wait and watch with you
as all is revealed, all is changed.
Before the revealing of love's way,
love's cost,
love's victory
and love's glory
may our lives be changed and reborn also.

Amen

Leith Fisher – Iona Dawn - Wild Goose Publications

Reflection

If only.

If only you had known, had recognised, had accepted,
had believed in, had worked out how to live in
the way that leads to peace. If only.

If only we could recognise it.

If only we could find the courage to walk that way together.

But, seeing what has happened instead,
it's only human to weep,

over the city: the place where people live closely together -
but in fact the place where they can't live together,
where peace is an empty word. If only.

I wrote this just after returning home from Jerusalem after a three-month
placement
in the West Bank with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in
Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). If Jesus were to look out from the Mount of
Olives

today over that divided and disputed city, he would still weep. He would
weep

when confronted by the Wall, the separation barrier around the West
Bank,

coming between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, and cutting through the
lives of
thousands of Palestinians.

Prayer

Weeping God,

you came to share our lives,
and still you share the vulnerability,
the suffering and desolation
of human beings in the land
that we call Holy,

and in many other places
made holy by your presence.

May we recognise your presence
amid each mess we've made;
give us your painful blessing of tears
for all we've done

and all we cannot prevent.

In the salt of tears

may we taste our common humanity
and, through them, help us to see
the way that leads to peace.

Jan Sutch Pickard - Iona Dawn - Wild Goose Publications

The Bright Field

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl
of great price, the one field that had
the treasure in it. I realize now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying
on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

R. S. Thomas

To keep Lent is to turn aside from the ordinary routines of our life
in order to reflect; to notice what is going on, to detect what is really
significant.

What has prompted you to choose to 'turn aside' this Lent?

The heart's time – Janet Morley Pub SPCK

Prayer

Lord of every pilgrim heart,
may I journey with You today
remembering those
who plotted against You;
who betrayed You;
who shared the Passover with You;
who argued with You about who came first with God;
who denied You;
who prayed with You;
who left You alone;
who arrested You;
who denied You again;

who beat You and mocked You —
that my own life may again
be propelled to a deeper understanding
of the One who holds us all,
through Your surprising Spirit,
alive in our midst.

Peter Millar - Iona Dawn - Wild Goose Publications

Prayer

Loving Saviour, show yourself to us
that knowing you we may love you as warmly in
return,
may love you alone, desire you alone,
contemplate you alone by day and night
and keep you always in our thoughts.
May affection for you pervade our hearts.
May attachment to you take possession of us all.
May love of you fill all our senses.
May we know no other love except you who are
eternal.

A love so great that the many waters of land and
sea will fail to quench it.

St Columbanus

Ray Simpson – Liturgies from Lindisfarne – Kevin Mayhew

Spring

Underneath winter's struggle for survival
Life waits to be born.
After long periods of apparent desolation
Shoots appear, and colour warms the earth
Gladdening the heart with hope.
Buried beneath our fears, preoccupations,
Apparent deadness, Life waits:
The growing is in the waiting.

Ann Lewin – Watching for the Kingfisher – Canterbury Press

Prayer tree

Prayer gives us rootedness,
Reaching out ~
Discovering in darkness
Sources of nourishment;
Pushing with patient insistence
Against obstacles;
Drawing from strange places
Strength for life that
Grows in light;
Holding us as we bend,
And when we break, offering
Hope, that from the
Unimaginable dark,
New shoots will spring.

Ann Lewin – Watching for the Kingfisher – Canterbury Press

Cross tree

A tree is something
You have to
Get to the
Top of.
Jesus climbed his,
With some
Assistance,
And stayed there,
Fixed by love,
To set us free
From the
Mad rush
To dominate
Our fellows.
'Take up your
Cross,'
He said, 'and
Follow Me.'

Ann Lewin – Watching for the Kingfisher – Canterbury Press

Rood-tree

I might have been his cradle,
Rocking him, folding
Securely against harm.
I could have been a ship,
Turning my sturdy timbers
To the wind, keeping him
Safe from storm.

Instead, they used me as
His cross.

No infant rages rocked the
Cradle tree, or storm lashed ship
Such as unleashed on me
That day. Shock waves of hatred
Crashed against me, bearing
On me through his body
Weight of world's pain,
Weight of his agony;
Wringing from him
Drop by drop,
'Why, God, you too?'

No comforting protection
Could I offer, or deliverance;
Only support, his mainstay in distress

But did I hold him, or did he
With strength of purpose lovingly
Embrace his work of suffering,
Stretched on my arms?

They say it was a tree whose fruit
Brought sorrow to the World.
The fruit I bore,
Though seeming shame,
They call salvation.

My glory was it then,
To be his tree.

Ann Lewin – Watching for the Kingfisher – Canterbury Press

Lent

Lent is a time to learn to travel
Light, to clear the clutter
From our crowded lives, and
Find a space, a desert.
Deserts are bleak: no creature
Comforts, only a vast expanse of
Stillness, sharpening awareness of
Ourselves and God.

Uncomfortable places, deserts.

Most of the time we're tempted to
Avoid them, finding good reasons to
Live lives of ease; cushioned by
Noise from self-discovery,
Clutching at world's success
To stave off fear.
But if we dare to trust the silence
To strip away our false security,
God can begin to grow his wholeness in us,
Fill up our emptiness, destroy our fears,
Give us new vision, courage for the journey
And make our desert blossom like a rose.

Ann Lewin – Watching for the Kingfisher – Canterbury Press

Holy Week

Palm Sunday

Jesus, bringer of a new way to live
What a sign — riding in gently on a donkey
Welcomed as the Son of David
But he was the warrior king —
You refused a war horse and chose the donkey
You came in to Jerusalem as the peace king
Not really as a king — perhaps the prince of peace —
Olive branches symbolizing peace were waved before you
This is a new world order — not the power of weapons
But the power of love
Not one who conquers with violence
But one who sacrifices rather than defends himself
Jesus, bringer of a new way to live
You have given us a sign
And a way to follow
That heals and brings hope
Garth Hewitt – Making Holy Dreams Come True - SPCK

Holy Monday

Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. (John 12:3, NRSV)

Because

Because
we have preserved our grace
in manna jars
for the long winter of despair,
storing them in the dark corners
of our souls,
we have forgotten
its gritty taste;
because
we have put a tight lid

on our joy,
and put it in the back
of the pantry,
we have forgotten
how it can tickle
our noses;
because
we are so busy
prattling pious platitudes
about the poor, the least, the lost
we ignore your words
which anoint them
as your children;
because
we have put up
the shutters and storm doors
to keep your future
from sneaking in,
we have missed
the sweet breeze
carrying your hope
to us;
because
we are who we are,
restore us, Holy Grace,
and make us
a fragrant offering to the world.

*Thom M Shuman – Wild Goose Big Book of Worship Resources – Wild
Goose Publications`*

A Funny way of going to Church

You have a funny way of going to church, Lord.
I half expected you
in cassock and stole,
intoning old psalms
and reverent, devout hymns.
But you came to upset all my tables, Lord,
all my settled habits of mind
and assumptions about you,
taken for granted over many years:
these are overturned and put to flight.
And so, Lord,

you who come to fill my life
with good things and kind blessings,
are welcomed also
as an Emptier.

Graham Jeffery - Thank You for Coming - Palm Tree Press

Washing of Feet

Feet and hands:
work-worn hands
reach out in love.
Indecisive hands respond,
embracing and repulsing.
Our hands held out to God:
'Come close, but not too close,
touch me, but don't ask me to change"
Washing of feet —
the work of a wife or a slave.
Too menial,
too intimate a gesture for the Master.
'If you want to be my companion,
let me touch you,
prepare to be changed,
have the courage to be like me.'
Bread broken, a body broken,
a cup poured out for us.
An example of humblest service
'Do you see what I have done?
Do this in my memory.'

Gemma Simmonds – The Closeness of God – Pauline Books and Media

Maundy Thursday

What, let you wash my feet?
Shouldn't it be the other way,
Me kneeling before you?
I don't think I can take such
Personal service — feet are
Funny things, shaped by experience,
Calloused and blistered;
I'm half ashamed to show

The state they're in.
And you might tickle,
I'd be helpless, at your mercy.

But you're serious, aren't you.
If I refuse, you say, I don't belong.
Take me then, Lord, and plunge me in
Not just my feet, but everything.

Why are you laughing? Too
Extravagant? Trusting you with my
Feet would be enough?
I want to do more than test the water,
I want to jump in with both Oh,
I see Lord, I am slow.

Please, wash my feet.
Ann Lewin – Watching for the Kingfisher – Canterbury Press

Challenge

On that night, there were
Two bowls of water.

The first was taken
And used for washing feet,
Symbol, he said, of love.

The second was called for
And used for washing hands,
Disclaiming responsibility.

The bowls are constantly before us
Into which will we dip our hands?
Ann Lewin – Watching for the Kingfisher – Canterbury Press

Before a Night Vigil on Thursday of Holy Week

Tonight our hearts are heavy.
Our Christ has given love exquisitely.
In his tiredness he has washed the tired feet of his
friends.

In his generosity he has given bread to his
betrayer.

In his prophetic provision he has, with bread and
wine, bequeathed a sacrament that makes him
always present to us.

In his prayers he has placed the church of every
time and place into the Divine heart.

In his bitter anguish in the garden he has fought
with demons and with doubt.

He has been led away captive, to be mocked and
tried.

He will not sleep this night
and he calls us to watch and pray.

He said, I give you a new command: Love one
another. As I have loved you, so you must love
one another. No one has greater love than to lay
down their lives for another.

Jesus, we love you.

We will lay down our lives for one another.

Ray Simpson – Liturgies from Lindisfarne – Kevin Mayhew

It's Strange how you Express Yourself

It is strange how you express yourself, Lord:
a whole life, expressed in three hours,
a whole love, expressed in one death,
thirty-three years crystallised
in one moment of affection:

“Father, for their sakes . . .”

And if it's not too late to say so, Lord,
thank you for coming,
though it seemed at the time
a strange visit:

the hay and the crib
to welcome you,

not much else.
And now at the end,
wood and nails again to bid you goodbye
Yet we, who can only offer
the wood and straw of our own life
are grateful
because we know
you will use us,
if you will.

Graham Jeffery - Thank You for Coming - Palm Tree Press

Shifting the blame

Several times it happened:
He was handed over
By people using authority
But refusing responsibility

Betrayal comes not only
With the words We speak,
But sometimes by
Allowing or encouraging
Events to take their course
Sins not of commission or
Omission, but careless
Permission.

Ann Lewin – Watching for the Kingfisher – Canterbury Press

Cross Prayers

Jesus, master carpenter of Nazareth,
who through wood and nails did win our full
salvation,
wield well your tools in this, your workshop,
that we who come to you rough hewn
may here be fashioned to a truer beauty by your
hand.

May we carry your cross in our hearts through
this day.
Your cross be in our eyes and in our looking.
Your cross be in our mouths and in our speaking

Your cross be in our hands and in our working.
Your cross be in our minds and in our thinking.
Ray Simpson – Liturgies from Lindisfarne – Kevin Mayhew

Christ of the scars

Christ of the scars,
into your hands we place the broken and
wounded . . .
Christ of the scars,
into your hands we place the victims of violence
and false accusation . . .
Christ of the scars,
into your hands we place the refugees and the
hungry . . .
Christ of the scars,
into your hands we place these we now name . . .
May the Christ who walked on wounded feet,
walk with us on the road.
May the Christ who serves with wounded hands,
stretch out our hands to serve.
May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart,
open our hearts to love.
Ray Simpson – Liturgies from Lindisfarne – Kevin Mayhew

Irony

Irony nails you
the carpenter
to a wooden cross
Kenneth Steven - Out of the Ordinary - St Andrew Press

Jesus carries the cross

Your arms are strong.
They have cradled children.
They have broken bread and served it to your friends.
They have prepared a meal for countless empty bellies
They have stretched to touch and raise and heal.
Your back is strong.

it has carried many cares.
It has bent to stroke a thousand fevered brows
and stooped to wash the dirt from dusty feet.
It has borne the weight of too much expectation.
Strong arms, strong back.
Strong enough for a cross?

Kathy Galloway – The Dream of Learning our True Name – Wild Goose Publications

Simon of Cyrene carries the cross

You met each other as strangers.
That is to say, you both were strange.
One of you estranged by deed beyond acceptance,
the other picked unerring from the concealing crowd.
But both of you were used to bearing burdens,
had grown accustomed to the lash upon your back.
Was it strange, to know the greatest tenderness that there
could be
would be to lean upon this strange man's strength?
How often did you ache to lean upon a strong man's
strength
and find that all your men relied on you?
Strange that, at the end, such tenderness should come
in this strange way, from one a stranger to you.

Kathy Galloway – The Dream of Learning our True Name – Wild Goose Publications

Simon of Cyrene

It wasn't what I'd planned —
My pilgrimage to join the Passover
Ended cross-carrying, glad
My sons weren't Witness to my shame.

But the man, bleeding in pain —
His dignity impressed: no cursing,
But forgiving words absorbing cruelty.
Although I had the cross, it seemed
He had the weight, almost as though
World's pain bore down on him.
What should be memory of shame,

Stays with me as a turning point in love;
I felt compelled to go not just a mile,
But on an endless journey into life.

Ann Lewin – Watching for the Kingfisher – Canterbury Press

Prayers for Good Friday

Hail! life-giving cross,
when all creation saw you,
all things' Maker and Creator,
hang naked on the cross,
it was changed by fear and wailed.
The sun's light failed and the earth quaked.
The rocks were rent
and temple's veil was rent in two.
The dead were raised from their tombs,
and the powers of heaven cried out in
astonishment:
How amazing this is!
The judge is judged,
he wills to suffer death,
to heal and renew the world.

From an Orthodox Great Vespers

O King of the Friday,
whose limbs were stretched on the cross,
O Lord who did suffer
the bruises, the wounds, the loss.
We stretch ourselves beneath the shield of your
might;
some fruit from the tree of your passion
fall on us this night!

Ancient Irish Prayer, anon.

Ray Simpson – Liturgies from Lindisfarne – Kevin Mayhew

Crossroads (The Centurion at the Crucifixion)

I cursed my luck, on duty in that heat:
The flies, the blood, the stench of death.
It was the loneliest place I've ever known,
Standing beside that cross. The crowds
Hurling abuse engulfed me with their hate;

Had he no friends? Standing not far away,
The women had more courage than the men,
But even his God, it seemed, had left him.
I've seen some crucifixions in my time,
But never one like this: the victim
More concerned for others than himself,
Asking forgiveness for his murderers.
And then that awful darkness, when the
World died with him, and the cry that
Pierced the darkness pierced me too.
Did he say, 'Finished'? The way I feel,
It's only just begun.
Ann Lewin – Watching for the Kingfisher – Canterbury Press

Peter

What have I done? I who would
Never leave him, so I said.
What have I done? I slept
When he most needed company,
Denied I knew him when he
Needed friends, ran when
They led him to a cross,
Stayed distant in his suffering.
How can I bear the memory of his look,
The love accepting me as friend?
Master, what have I done?
Ann Lewin – Watching for the Kingfisher – Canterbury Press

Crucifixion and Resurrection

“Lord, help us to see in your Crucifixion and Resurrection
an example of how to endure and seemingly die in the
agony and conflict of daily life, so that We may live more
fully and creatively.”
Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Reflection

Mother Teresa suggests we look to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection to
help us in our daily conflicts and problems. Our
challenges Will never come close to our Lord's pain and suffering,

but we can learn from Jesus how we are to endure hardship and challenges.

Mother Teresa reminds us that in gaining strength through prayer and imitation of our Saviour, we will be much more fulfilled. St. Paul reminds us, "If we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection" (Rom 6:5).

A Story from Mother Teresa's Life

Mother Teresa was keenly aware of human suffering. She cautioned people when she preached that money is not enough to alleviate many kinds

of pain and trouble. Money can't buy love.

People need care and love, she would say. One time a man who was Half blind came to Mother Teresa and begged her to send some sisters to visit

him and his wife because their children were overseas and they Were very lonely. They hadn't heard the sound of another human voice in some time. They yearned for some tenderness.

Mother Teresa encouraged others to search out the poor and lonely. They may be living next door to us. She said the poor can appear very rich with material things but are hurting inside due to lack of love. She beckons us to be an instrument of Jesus' love for them.

Donna Maria Cooper O'Boyle – Bringing Lent Home with Mother Teresa – Ave Maria Press

Prayers for Holy Saturday

Today a grave holds him
who holds creation in his hand.

A gravestone covers him
who covers the heavens with glory.

Life sleeps. Hell trembles.

The human race waits with bated breath.

We have been buried with Christ through
baptism.

In faith we will journey with him into dark and
unknown places.

He who holds all things together
was lifted up on the cross
and all creation lamented.

The sun hid its rays.

The stars withheld their light.
The earth shook in fear.
The seas fled and the rocks were split.
Tombs were opened.
The bodies of holy people were raised.
The nether world groaned.
The authorities spread a false report
about Christ's resurrection.
All creation waits with bated breath.
We have been buried with Christ through
baptism.
In faith we will journey with him into dark and
unknown places.
Ray Simpson – Liturgies from Lindisfarne – Kevin Mayhew

Easter

"Keep the Light of Christ always burning in your heart—
for He is the Way to Walk. He is the Life to live. He is the
Love to love."

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Reflection

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia! Happy Easter! Today is
the feast of all feasts. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we are
promised the gift of new life in this World and the next. This is truly
a day of celebration, bask in it with your family, enjoy one another's
company, be blessed at Church, and celebrate with great joy! Carry
that joy into the days ahead. Strive to be a beacon of light for others
so that they may find their way to heaven one day.

A Story from Mother Teresa's Life

One time when Mother Teresa and a few of her nuns were travelling,
The woman driver took a few moments to tell them that she
had a great love and respect for their religious order. Mother Teresa
inquired why she felt that way. The woman proceeded to tell her that
she was always impressed by the way they greeted one another. She
said it was as if they hadn't seen one another in a long time or were
meeting for the first time. The love and joy that appeared to fill their
embraces and greetings were astounding to this woman. The light
of Christ was clear to her. It made a difference in that woman's life.

*Donna Maria Cooper O'Boyle – Bringing Lent Home with Mother Teresa
– Ave Maria Press*