

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 2020
LIVING FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

Prayer of the Day

Merciful God, your Son was lifted up on the cross to draw all people to himself. Grant that we who have been born out of his wounded side may at all times find mercy in Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

A reading from Isaiah 52:13-53:12 *(From "The Message" by Dr. Eugene Peterson)*

13 "Just watch my servant blossom! Exalted, tall, head and shoulders above the crowd! **14** But he didn't begin that way. At first everyone was appalled. He didn't even look human - a ruined face, disfigured past recognition. **15** Nations all over the world will be in awe, taken aback, kings shocked into silence when they see him. For what was unheard of they'll see with their own eyes, what was unthinkable they'll have right before them."

1 Who believes what we've heard and seen? Who would have thought God's saving power would look like this? **2** The servant grew up before God - a scrawny seedling, a scrubby plant in a parched field. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing to cause us to take a second look. **3** He was looked down on and passed over, a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand. One look at him and people turned away. We looked down on him, thought he was scum. **4** But the fact is, it was our pains he carried - our disfigurements, all the things wrong with us. We thought he brought it on himself, that God was punishing him for his own failures. **5** But it was our sins that did that to him, that ripped and tore and crushed him - our sins! He took the punishment, and that made us whole. Through his bruises we get healed.

6 We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost. We've all done our own thing, gone our own way. And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong, on him, on him. **7** He was beaten, he was tortured, but he didn't say a word. Like a lamb taken to be slaughtered and like a sheep being sheared, he took it all in silence. **8** Justice miscarried, and he was led off - and did anyone really know what was happening? He died without a thought for his own welfare, beaten bloody for the sins of my people. **9** They buried him with the wicked, threw him in a grave with a rich man, even though he'd never hurt a soul or said one word that wasn't true.

10 Still, it's what God had in mind all along, to crush him with pain. The plan was that he give himself as an offering for sin so that he'd see life come from it - life, life, and more life. And God's plan will deeply prosper through him. **11** Out of that terrible travail of soul, he'll see that it's worth it and be glad he did it. Through what he experienced, my righteous one, my servant, will make many "righteous ones," as he himself carries the burden of their sins. **12** Therefore I'll reward him extravagantly - the best of everything, the highest honors - Because he looked death in the face and didn't flinch, because he embraced the company of the lowest. He took on his own shoulders the sin of the many, he took up the cause of all the black sheep.

Holy Gospel The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John 18:1-19:42
(or the briefer version below from John 19:1-42). *From The Message*

1 So Pilate took Jesus and had him whipped. **2** The soldiers, having braided a crown from thorns, set it on his head, threw a purple robe over him, **3** and approached him with, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they greeted him with slaps in the face. **4** Pilate went back out again and said to them, "I present him to you, but I want you to know that I do not find him guilty of any crime." **5** Just then Jesus came out wearing the thorn crown and purple robe. Pilate announced, "Here he is: the Man." **6** When the high priests and police saw him, they shouted in a frenzy, "Crucify! Crucify!" Pilate told them, "You take him. You crucify him. I find nothing wrong with him." **7** The Jews answered, "We have a law, and by that law he must die because he claimed to be the Son of God."

8 When Pilate heard this, he became even more scared. **9** He went back into the palace and said to Jesus, "Where did you come from?" Jesus gave no answer. **10** Pilate said, "You won't talk? Don't you know that I have the authority to pardon you, and the authority to crucify you?" **11** Jesus said, "You haven't a shred of authority over me except what has been given you from heaven. That's why the one who betrayed me to you has committed a far greater fault." **12** At this, Pilate tried his best to pardon him, but the Jewish religious leaders and police shouted him down: "If you pardon this man, you're no friend of Caesar's. Anyone setting himself up as 'king' defies Caesar."

13 When Pilate heard those words, he led Jesus outside. He sat down at the judgment seat in the area designated Stone Court (in Hebrew, *Gabbatha*). **14** It was the preparation day for Passover. The hour was noon. Pilate said to those gathered there, "Here is your king." **15** They shouted back, "Kill him! Kill him! Crucify him!" Pilate said, "I am to crucify your king?" The high priests answered, "We have no king except Caesar." **16** Pilate caved in to their demand. He turned him over to be crucified.

17 Carrying his cross, Jesus went out to the place called Skull Hill (the name in Hebrew is *Golgotha*), **18** where they crucified him, and with him two others, one on each side, Jesus in the middle. **19** Pilate wrote a sign and had it placed on the cross. It read: Jesus the Nazarene the king of the Jews. **20** Many of the Judeans read the sign because the place where Jesus was crucified was right next to the city. It was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. **21** The Jewish high priests objected. "Don't write," they said to Pilate, "'The King of the Jews.' Make it, 'This man said, 'I am the King of the Jews''." **22** Pilate said, "What I've written, I've written."

23 When they crucified him, the Roman soldiers took his clothes and divided them up four ways, to each soldier a fourth. But his robe was seamless, a single piece of weaving, **24** so they said to each other, "Let's not tear it up. Let's throw dice to see who gets it." This confirmed the Scripture that said, "They divided up my clothes among them and threw dice for my coat." (The soldiers validated the Scriptures!)

25 Jesus' mother, his aunt, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood at the foot of the cross. **26** Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her. He said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." **27** Then to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that moment the disciple accepted her as his own mother.

28 Jesus, seeing that everything had been completed so that the Scripture record might also be complete, then said, "I'm thirsty." **29** A jug of sour wine was standing by. Someone put a sponge soaked with the wine on a javelin and lifted it to his mouth. **30** After he took the wine, Jesus said, "It's done . . . It is complete." Bowing his head, he offered up his spirit.

(It is appropriate here to pause for a time of reflection on the death of our Saviour).

31 Then, since it was the day of Sabbath preparation, and so the bodies wouldn't stay on the crosses over the Sabbath (it was a high holy day that year), the Jewish leaders petitioned Pilate that their legs be broken to speed death, and the bodies taken down. **32** So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man crucified with Jesus, and then the other. **33** When they got to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. **34** One of the soldiers stabbed him in the side with his spear. Blood and water gushed out. **35** The eyewitness to these things has presented an accurate report. He saw it himself and is telling the truth so that you, also, will believe. **36** These things that happened confirmed the Scripture, "Not a bone in his body was broken," **37** and the other Scripture that reads, "They will stare at the one they pierced."

38 After all this, Joseph of Arimathea (he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, because he was intimidated by the Jews) petitioned Pilate to take the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission. So Joseph came and took the body. **39** Nicodemus, who had first come to Jesus at night, came now in broad daylight carrying a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. **40** They took Jesus' body and, following the Jewish burial custom, wrapped it in linen with the spices. **41** There was a garden near the place he was crucified, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been placed. **42** So, because it was Sabbath preparation for the Jews and the tomb was convenient, they placed Jesus in it.

The Sermon

1500 years ago, St. Anselm ascended his pulpit on Good Friday and said,
"I do not know if I wish to speak today.
Why should I speak when my Saviour is silent and dies?"

Certainly every preacher has felt the same.
Now that the great drama draws to its close,
all anyone can do is think quietly and personally
about the meaning of the cross and the meaning of our Saviour's death.

And it is **that** I am asking you to do with me now:
To listen quietly and share with our Lord his last moments. . .
and to try and understand the words--and their impact on us --

these words from Matthew 27:42 I have chosen to speak on.
“He saved others; he cannot save himself.”

Yes, “he saved others, but he cannot save himself.”

It is true that those mocking him were partly right. . .but they were also wrong.

For if he had so desired, he could have saved himself.

He might have worked out a compromise with the priests,
or made a bargain with Caiaphas, the High Priest,
or talked things over with Pilate, the governor.

He might have made his rule political rather than spiritual.
He could have chosen the easy way rather than the right way. . .
but he didn't.

And he didn't because he knew then what we have learned and know now—
namely, that no one can save themselves if they wish to save another.

Indeed, if any person wants to save another, the command they must obey. . .
the stern condition they must fulfill. . .is that they cannot save themselves—

because to love is not to think of myself
but rather to give myself for the one I love.
And he loved us so. . .and so gave himself for us.

But could not Christ have saved us without the shedding of his blood?
Why did he have to die as he did—cut off in his youth so cruelly?
Why did he have to die? Why?

Well, suppose. . .just suppose. . .that there swept over me
a wave of regret and sorrow—a desire to make atonement. . .to make up for. . .
all the wrongs I have done. What a task that would be!

I would think of yesterday, and I would remember the things I had said
that hurt my wife or gave my children pain
or cut into the heart of one of you out there
whose sensitivity or feelings were hurt deeply.
And I would say, “Let me take the pain I caused and bear it myself.”

And I would go to my wife, my children, my family and their families. . .
my friends. . .and you—each one of you and all of you—
and I would gather up the pain I caused and lay it on my own heart.

And then I would remember the deeds done yesterday
of which I am ashamed now: deeds that wounded others,
deeds that took from them some peace and joy.

And I would say, "Let me bear that shame. . .
and the peace you have lost, let me lose it, too."

And then I would say to the judge of my own conscience,
"I am guilty of these and these things.
Let me bear the punishment I so justly deserve."
And the judge within my own heart would fix the penalty:
How much suffering I should undergo. . .
what punishment I deserve. . .what pain is warranted
for breaking someone's heart. . .for telling a lie. . .
for spreading a rumour or suspicion or a bit of gossip. How much would it be?

And then I would remember the day before yesterday and do the same thing;
then the day before that. . .and last week. . .last month. . .last year.
And if my conscience laid upon me
the just punishment for all my own sins,
my heart would be crushed beneath the weight of it and I could not bear it.

I wouldn't have to go very far back into my yesterdays
to try and make up for them without being broken completely. . .
so that no matter how much I loved you:
you, my wife. . .my family. . .my friends—
I could not take your shame or your punishment or your wounds
having so much of my own to bear.

And so, what I need. . .what you need. . .what we all need
is to find someone whose own burden is light.
And this man, this Jesus the Christ, is the only one who meets that need. . .
for he has no burden of his own to bear.

And because he loves us—because he loves you. . .
and because he loves me, he says to us:
"I will take your burdens: the pain you have caused,
the sorrow and disappointment, the disgrace and the shame—
I will take it all and carry it for you;
and the punishment you cannot bear, I will bear for you."
And he would gather it all up and lay it on his back.

And in order to make right all the wrongs since the world first began;
in order to take away all human pain since the first baby cried;
in order to bear all the sorrows since the first tear glistened on a human cheek,
he took upon himself a load that crushed him.

To take from our hearts all our griefs and sorrows,
all our heartaches and heartbreaks—
to take all these from our hearts, he had to break his own. . .
and that is the mystery of the cross.
That is the mystery of the cross.

And what can you. . .I. . .we. . .what can we say to a Saviour like that?
What can you and I. . .we . . .do in the face of such love?
What can we say when our Lord has died?
What can we do in return for the One who had the power
of all creation in his hands and gave it all up for us. . .
whose young life ended so that ours wouldn't have to:
what can we do?

Nothing! Nothing! Nothing but accept his invitation
extended to all people to believe in him, to trust in him,
to be loved and forgiven by him, to be served and saved by him. . .
and to follow him.

And then, from the places where we are right now—
the places where we are worshipping in. . .which are the places we live in--
to go out when we are able and where we are able. . .
and to love as he loved us. . .giving ourselves to others,
completely, and without asking. Completely. . .and without asking.

So, let us receive the gifts of forgiveness and freedom, the gifts of peace and hope,
the gifts of wholeness and new life—all the gifts of salvation he offers—
and then, in willing and grateful joy, do as he did. . .
and give ourselves to another: Whether spouse or lover,
son or daughter, neighbour or stranger, friend or enemy.
Give ourselves to another. . .so that another might be served. . .
so that another might be healed. . .so that another might be saved.

Amen. SDG (Soli Deo Gloria)

The Hymn of the Day

“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”

1. O sacred head, now wounded, with grief and shame weighted down,
now scornfully surrounded with thorns, thine only crown;
O sacred head, what glory, what bliss till now was thine!
Yet, though despised and gory, I joy to call thee mine.

2. How pale thou art with anguish, with sore abuse and scorn;
how does thy face now languish, which once was bright as morn?
thy grief and bitter passion were all for sinners' gain;
mine, mine was the transgression, but thine the deadly pain.
3. What language shall I borrow to thank thee, dearest friend,
for this thy dying sorrow, thy pity without end?
Oh, make me thine forever, and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never outlive my love to thee.
4. Lord, be my consolation; shield me when I must die;
remind me of thy passion when my last hour draws night.
These eyes, new faith receiving, from thee shall never move;
for all who die believing die safely in thy love.

The Bidding Prayer

Silence for private prayer may follow each bid (or introduction) to or for the prayer which follows

Let us pray, sisters and brothers, for the holy church throughout the world.

Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God, you have shown your glory to all nations in Jesus Christ.

By your Holy Spirit guide the church and gather it throughout the world.

Help it to persevere in faith, proclaim your name,

and bring the good news of salvation in Christ to all people.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for *name/s* our bishops or leaders, for *name/s* our pastor(s),
for all servant-leaders of the church, and for all the people of God.

Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God, your Spirit guides the church and makes it holy.

Strengthen and uphold our bishops, pastors, deacons, other ministers, and lay leaders.

Keep them in health and safety for the good of the church, and help each of us
in our various vocations to do faithfully the work to which you have called us.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for our sisters and brothers who share our faith in Jesus Christ.

Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God, you give your church unity.

Look with favor on all who follow Jesus your Son.

Make all the baptized one in the fullness of faith, and keep us united in the fellowship of love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for the Jewish people, the first to hear the word of God.

Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God,

long ago you gave your promise to Abraham and your teaching to Moses.

Hear our prayers that the people you called and elected as your own may receive the fulfillment of the covenant's promises.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ.
Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God, gather into your embrace
all those who call out to you under different names.
Bring an end to inter-religious strife, and make us more faithful witnesses
of the love made known to us in your Son. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those who do not believe in God.
Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God, you created humanity
so that all may long to know you and find peace in you.
Grant that all may recognize the signs of your love and grace
in the world and in the lives of Christians,
and gladly acknowledge you as the one true God.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for God's creation.
Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God, you are the creator of a magnificent universe.
Hold all the worlds in the arms of your care and bring all things to fulfillment in you.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those who serve in public office.
Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God, you are the champion of the poor and oppressed.
In your goodness, give wisdom to those in authority, so that all people everywhere
may enjoy justice, peace, freedom, and a share in the goodness of your creation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those in need.
Silent prayer.

Almighty and eternal God, you give strength to the weary
and new courage to those who have lost heart. Heal the sick, comfort the dying,
give safety to travelers, free those unjustly deprived of liberty,
and deliver your world from falsehood, hunger, and disease.
Hear the prayers of all who call on you in any trouble,
that they may have the joy of receiving your help in their need.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Finally, let us pray for all those things for which our Lord would have us ask.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

The Procession of the Cross

Since a procession is not possible, holding a cross or crucifix before us will help us focus our attention as we speak the words below as an adoration of the crucified Christ

Behold the life-giving cross, on which was hung the Saviour of the whole world.
Oh, come, let us worship him.

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We glory in your cross, O Lord, and we praise your holy resurrection,
for by your cross joy has come into the world.
May God be merciful and bless us; may the light of God's face shine upon us.
Let your way be known upon earth, your saving health among all nations.

We glory in your cross, O Lord, and we praise your holy resurrection,
for by your cross joy has come into the world.
Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.
May God give us blessing, and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

We glory in your cross, O Lord, and we praise your holy resurrection,
for by your cross joy has come into the world.

After a brief silence, we continue:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

A Closing hymn of Triumph

“Sing, My Tongue”

1. Sing my tongue, the glorious battle; tell the triumph far and wide;
tell aloud the wondrous story of the cross, the Crucified;
tell how Christ, the world's redeemer, vanquished death the day he died.
2. Tell how, when at length the fullness of the appointed time was come,
Christ, the Word, was born of woman, left for us the heav'nly home,
blazed the path of true obedience, shone as light amidst the gloom.

3. Thirty years among us dwelling, Jesus went from Nazareth,
destined, dedicated, willing, did his work, and met his death;
like a lamb he humbly yielded on the cross his dying breath.
4. Faithful cross, true sign of triumph, be for all the noblest tree;
none on foliage, none in blossom, none in fruit your equal be;
symbol of the world's redemption for your burden makes us free.
5. Unto God be praise and glory; to the Father and the Son,
to the eternal Spirit honour now and evermore be done;
praise and glory in the highest, while the timeless ages run.

There is no blessing or benediction given to remind us that the crucifixion and resurrection are both one saving act—an act of love which love gives its own life to give new life to the world. We prepare now for the final scene in this act which we will celebrate two days from now.