

MONDAY 6 APRIL
 Isaiah 42:1-9
 Psalm 36:5-11
 Hebrews 9:11-15
 John 12:1-11

TUESDAY 7 APRIL
 Isaiah 49:1-7
 Psalm 71:1-14
 [or 71:1-8]
 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
 John 12:20-36

WEDNESDAY 8 APRIL
 Isaiah 50:4-9a
 Psalm 70
 Hebrews 12:1-3
 John 13:21-32

THURSDAY 9 APRIL
 Maundy Thursday
 Exodus 12:1-4
 [5-10] 11-14
 Psalm 116:1, 10-end
 [or 116:9-end]
 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
 John 13:1-17, 31b-35

FRIDAY 10 APRIL
 Good Friday
 Isaiah 52:13 – end of 53
 Psalm 22 [or 22:1-11
 or 22:1-21]
 Hebrews 10:16-25
 or Hebrews
 4:14-16; 5:7-9
 John 18:1 – end of 19

SATURDAY 11 APRIL
 Job 14:1-14 or
 Lamentations 3:1-9,
 19-24
 Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16
 [or 31:1-5]
 1 Peter 4:1-8
 Matthew 27:57-end
 or John 19:38-end

REFLECTION

Heading through Holy Week towards Good Friday's long Passion Gospel, Paul's words on Tuesday stand out: The foolishness of the cross? Does he mean that it is folly for someone claiming to be Son of God to end up hanging on a cross? Surely that put an end to his claims? Yet the real foolishness was shown, then as now, by those who misunderstood Christ's mission of reconciliation.



In dying for the wise and the foolish, for Jews and Gentiles, women and men, Jesus embodied God's own wisdom. All week we see human wisdom turned upside down. Mary of Bethany's scandalous anointing of Jesus, foreigners begging to see Jesus, Peter's slowness to understand the foot-washing, later denying that he even knew his friend – but all are saved. What more proof do we need of the extent of God's love for all human beings? Yes, love covers a multitude of sins.

No strict rules, whether social or religious, no slowness of understanding, no faults or failures, disqualify us from God's love, embodied in the perfect sacrifice repeatedly stressed in readings from Hebrews. Foolish as it may seem, that's why we can call this Friday "Good"!

PRAYER

Wise and wonderful God, you forgive our foolish ways and nail them to the cross. In this Holy Week, open our hearts to those we consider foolish, who do not keep our rules. May we see in them the face of our crucified Redeemer, in whose name we pray.

STATIONS OF THE RESURRECTION

STATION I – THE SEALED TOMB

Stations of the Resurrection is a recently popularised devotional, spiritual and liturgical practice. In the coming weeks we serialise some extracts from Richard Greatrex's book, which takes the reader from the Sealed Tomb to Pentecost in sixteen stations.

Like a full stop carved out of limestone, a great boulder is cast in front of the entrance of the tomb. The story ends here, the point of no return. It is an impenetrable cataract rolling across a pupil, sealing it so that no sliver of the light of the world can slip out, sneak past the guards, break into the darkness and dance with the shadows.

Joseph has been busy – it is all he can do: organise, problem-solve, make the best of a bad situation, throw money at it. But he is broken, his secret hopes buried. Even so, it is a bold gesture, giving dignity to the corpse of a "criminal", rescuing it from the fate of some refuse pit and laying it in his own expensively procured grave. More than that, he is declaring his hand, openly backing the losing side in a political power struggle, a battle for the soul of the people. His respectable status has just taken a massive hit.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary will busy themselves with the task of cleaning the body, packing linen wraps with preserving and sweet-smelling herbs. But that can't be done today. The Pharisees too have been on the go – planning, plotting, twisting this way and that in the glare of Roman attention, trying to defend their patch, preserve the integrity of their religion and the last shreds of their authority.

One question resurfaces again and again: "Where is God in all this?" There is an answer behind that tomb door. It is an answer that gives no reprieve, generates a barracking swarm of further questions and feels as small, dark, unfathomable as a firmly inked full point.

When all hope has been buried, where do we go from here?

From *Stations of the Resurrection: from Easter to Pentecost*.
 Code: 1841 ISBN: 9780852315453 Price: £12.95

Richard Greatrex is a parish priest, bookseller and author from Somerset.



LIVE
 the **WORD**

SUSTAINING YOU
 THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
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 and
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Holy Week
 Monday 6 April to
 Saturday 11 April
 2020