

PASSIONTIDE

The final days leading up to Easter are known as Passiontide. They represent the closing moments of the great drama that has led Christ and His followers to the inevitability of that first Good Friday and the anticipation of its subsequent Easter. There is both a foreboding and yet also a hope set within the sequence of events, each with its own edge on the principal storyline.

In our prayers, we witness to this unfolding drama – and use our imagination to take us back to that scene in first-century Palestine where Christ, having come to the end of His earthly teaching, prepares for the transition to a greater depth and height and wonder. And with it, comes a promise – that we too, facing potentially cataclysmic happenings in our own time, may pass through such trauma and reach a more hopeful future. As the virus currently takes hold within society, we are all-too-aware of its impending sense of 'Good Friday' – may our faith ensure that 'Easter Day' will indeed follow.

This short liturgy is designed to be used in your own homes – and we hope that it will be of use to you at this time. You can share it as a family around your kitchen-table as it is perfectly shaped to include a cup of coffee and your PJs! You can sit quietly by yourself, and ponder its words. You can light a candle to burn as you follow it. However you use it, pause and remember the rest of our Church community at this time – and look forward to a time of celebration when we will indeed be together again ...

A LITURGY FOR PASSIONTIDE follows ...

A LITURGY FOR PASSIONTIDE

Blessed are you, God of Compassion and mercy,
to you be praise and glory for ever.

In the darkness of our sin,
your light breaks forth like the dawn
and your healing springs up for deliverance.
As we rejoice in the gift of your saving help,
sustain us with your bountiful Spirit
and open our lips to sing your praise

A Song of Lamentation

Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?
Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow;
Which was brought upon me,
which the Lord inflicted
on the day of his fierce anger.
For these things I weep;
my eyes flow with tears;
for a comforter is far from me,
one to revive my courage;
Remember my affliction and my bitterness,
the wormwood and the gall!
The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
"The Lord is my portion," says my soul,
"therefore I will hope in him."
The Lord is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul that seeks him.
It is good that we should wait quietly
for the salvation of the Lord.
It is good to bear the yoke in our youth;
to sit alone in silence when he has imposed it.
For the Lord will not reject for ever;
though he cause grief, he will have compassion.
According to the abundance of his steadfast love;
for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone

A Word of Scripture

EZEKIEL 37:1-14

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones.

He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry.

He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?"

I answered, "O Lord God, you know."

Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them:

O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.

I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord."

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone.

I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them; but there was no breath in them.

Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath:

Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."

I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel.

They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.'

Therefore prophecy, and say to them,

Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel.

And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people.

I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord."

A Song of the Lord's Steadfast Love

Who is this that comes from Edom,
coming from Bozrah, his garments stained crimson?

Who is this in glorious apparel,
marching in the greatness of his strength?

"It is I, who announces that right has won the day,
it is I," says the Lord, "for I am mighty to save."

Why are your robes all red, O Lord,
and your garments like theirs who tread the winepress?

"I have trodden the winepress alone,
and from the peoples no one was with me."

I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord,
the praises of the Most High;

All that God has done for us in his mercy,
by his many acts of love.

For God said, "Surely, they are my people,
my children who will not deal falsely,"
and he became their Saviour in all their distress,

So God redeemed them by his love and pity;
he lifted them up and carried them
through all the days of old

A Quiet Moment ...

*... as you offer your own thoughts and prayers.
You may wish to focus upon our daily e-Prayer*

*or use the List version as a sort-of Litany
followed by ...*

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you:
God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;
we preach Christ crucified,
the power of God and the wisdom of God;
God forbid that I should glory,
save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.
We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;
by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world

The Lord's Prayer

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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen

A Prayer for Passiontide

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

May Christ, who bore our sins on the cross,
set us free to serve him with joy.
So, let us bless the Lord!