

Prayer at Home

during the Season of

Lent



The **Parish** of the **Holy Trinity**, East Ham
St Bartholomew St Mary Magdalene St Edmund



Prayer at Home during Lent and Passiontide

Lent may originally have followed Epiphany, just as Jesus' time in the wilderness followed immediately on his baptism. Sometimes, of course, there is less than a week between Candlemas and Ash Wednesday! Lent soon became firmly attached to Easter, in the early church the principal occasion for baptism and also for reconciliation. This history explains the keynotes of Lent – self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study, and preparation for Easter, to which almsgiving has traditionally been added.

As candidates for baptism were instructed in Christian faith, and as penitents prepared themselves, through fasting and penance, to be readmitted to communion, the whole Christian community was invited to join them in the process of study and repentance, the extension of which over forty days would remind them of the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, being tested by Satan.

Ashes are an ancient sign of penitence; from the middle ages it became the custom to begin Lent by being marked in ash with the sign of the cross. The calculation of the forty days has varied considerably in Christian history. It is now usual in the West to count them continuously to the end of Holy Week (not including Sundays), so beginning Lent on the sixth Wednesday before Easter, Ash Wednesday. Liturgical dress is the simplest possible. Churches are kept bare of flowers and decoration. Gloria in excelsis is not used. The Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare or Refreshment Sunday) was allowed as a day of relief from the rigour of Lent, and the Feast of the Annunciation almost always falls in Lent; these breaks from austerity are the background to the modern observance of Mothering Sunday on the Fourth Sunday of Lent.

As Holy Week approaches, the atmosphere of the season darkens; the readings begin to anticipate the story of Christ's suffering and death, and the reading of the Passion Narrative gave to the Fifth Sunday its name of Passion Sunday. There are many devotional exercises which may be used in Lent and Holy Week outside the set liturgy. The Stations of the Cross, made popular in the West by the Franciscans after they were granted custody of the Christian sites in the Holy Land, are the best known.

We are now preparing to spend a second Lent 'locked down,' or with some restrictions on communal worship in churches. These resources are offered as way of deepening your personal prayer life with some seasonal material. They can be used in whatever way is helpful, alone, or with other members of the same household or bubble. If used with others, the plain text suggests words that might be for the person leading and bold text for everyone to join in.

MORNING *or* EVENING PRAYER

For in the Morning or Early on in the Day

✠ O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Hear our voice, O Lord, according to your faithful love
according to your judgement give us life.

A period of silence for reflection may follow.

THE WORD OF GOD

Psalmody

The Psalm of the Day, or

Psalm 131

How long will you forget me, O Lord; for ever?
How long will you hide your face from me?

How long shall I have anguish in my soul
and grief in my heart, day after day?

How long shall my enemy triumph over me?

Look upon me and answer, O Lord my God;
lighten my eyes, lest I sleep in death;

Lest my enemy say, 'I have prevailed against him,'
and my foes rejoice that I have fallen.

But I put my trust in your steadfast love;
my heart will rejoice in your salvation.

I will sing to the Lord,
for he has dealt so bountifully with me.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Scripture Reading

The following, or a reading set for the day

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Isaiah 58. 6,7

The Gospel Canticle

either in the morning:

Benedictus – The Song of Zechariah

**Refrain: Blessed are those
who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.**

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,
who has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets God promised of old
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us,

To show mercy to our ancestors,
and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

Free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

To give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of all their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 1.68–79

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

***Refrain:* Blessed are those
who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.**



or later in the day:

Magnificat – The Song of Mary

**Refrain: Come, let us return to the Lord,
for our God will richly pardon.**

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed;
the Almighty has done great things for me
and holy is his name.

He has mercy on those who fear him,
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm
and has scattered the proud in their conceit,

Casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,
to remember his promise of mercy,

The promise made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Luke 1.46-55

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**Refrain: Come, let us return to the Lord,
for our God will richly pardon.**

PRAYERS

Personal prayers, or simply silence

The Collect

Almighty God,
may we, by the prayer and discipline of Lent,
enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings;
that by following in the Way,
we may come to share in the glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven;
hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come;
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil;
for thine is the Kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen**

THE CONCLUSION

✠ May God bless us,
that in us may be found love and humility,
obedience and thanksgiving,
discipline, gentleness and peace.

Amen.

COMPLINE

For Late in the Evening

PREPARATION

✠ The Lord almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end.
Amen.

Our help is in the name of the Lord
who made heaven and earth.

A period of silence for reflection on the past day may follow.

The following words of penitence may be used:

**Most merciful God,
we confess to you,
before the whole company of heaven
and one another,
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed
and in what we have failed to do.
Forgive us our sins,
heal us by your Spirit
and raise us to new life in Christ.
Amen.**

✠ O God make speed to save us.
O Lord make haste to help us.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever.
Amen.**

This Hymn may be sung to any familiar long metre tune, e.g. Glory to thee my God this night – Te lucis ante terminum, or another hymn may be sung.

Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the world, we pray
That you, with steadfast love, would keep
Your watch around us while we sleep.

From evil dreams defend our sight,
From fears and terrors of the night;
Tread underfoot our deadly foe
That we no sinful thought may know.

To you, O saving Three in One,
Let homage due by all be done;
And grant us, by the cross restored,
To share the Victor's great reward. Amen.

THE WORD OF GOD

Psalmody

From Psalm 139:

O Lord you have searched me out and known me;
you know my sitting down and my rising up
you discern my thoughts from afar.

You mark out my journeys and my resting place
and are acquainted with all my ways.

For there is not a word on my tongue,
but you, O Lord, know it altogether.

You encompass me behind and before
and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go then from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?

If I climb up to heaven, you are there;
if I make the grave my bed you are there also.

If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

Even there your hand shall lead me,
your right hand hold me fast.

If I say, 'Surely the darkness will cover me
and the light around me turn to night,'

Even darkness is no darkness with you;
the night is as clear as the day
darkness and light to you are both alike.

For you yourself created my inmost parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I thank you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are
your works, my soul knows well

My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was made in secret
and woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes beheld my form, as yet unfinished;
already in your book were all my members written,

As day by day they were fashioned
when as yet there was none of them.

How deep are your counsels to me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!

If I count them, they are more in number than the sand,
and at the end, I am still in your presence.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Scripture Reading

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and Jesus said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.' And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, 'Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.' He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. He came a third time and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.'

Mark 14.32-42

Silence is kept

The Responory

Into your hands O Lord, I commend my spirit

Into your hands O Lord, I commend my spirit.

For you have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth;

I commend my Spirit.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Into your hands O Lord, I commend my spirit

Keep me as the apple of your eye.

Hide me under the shadow of your wings.

The Gospel Canticle *Nunc Dimittis*

Refrain

**Christ himself bore our sins in his body on the tree;
That we might die to sin and live to righteousness.**

Now Lord you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.

My own eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people;

A light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people Israel.

(Luke 2.29-32)

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Refrain

**Christ himself bore our sins in his body on the tree;
That we might die to sin and live to righteousness.**

PRAYERS

There may be a time of personal prayer or simply silence.

The Collect

Almighty God,
as we stand at the foot of the cross of your Son,
help us to see you and to know your love for us,
so that in humility, love and joy
we may place at his feet
all that we have and all that we are;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven;
hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come;
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil;
for thine is the Kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

THE CONCLUSION

In peace we will lie down and sleep;
for you alone, Lord, make us dwell in safety.

Abide with us, Lord Jesus,
for the night is at hand and the day is now past.

As the night watch looks for the morning,
so do we look for you, O Christ.

✠ May God bless us,
that in us may be found love and humility,
obedience and thanksgiving,
discipline, gentleness and peace.
Amen.

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