

# St Luke & St Finnian



Worship at Home

Palm Sunday

5<sup>th</sup> April 2020

While public worship is suspended, we hope to produce a sheet each week to help you worship at home, and feel connected to others who are doing the same.

We also encourage you to join in the worship service offered by our bishops at 11am on Sunday. All bishops of the province will be working together to share this service from their homes.

You can find it here:

<http://www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship/>

*The image on the front is The Entry into Jerusalem by Pietro Lorenzetti. Painted c.1320 for the Lower Basilica, St Francis, Assisi.*

*On the last page you will see Enrique Simonet's depiction of the same subject painted in 1892*

Find a space where you can focus. It might feel strange to say the words out loud if you are on your own but give it a try, or you can say the words in your head.

You might find it helpful to have an icon, a crucifix, a cross, or a lighted candle to help focus your thoughts as you pray.

## Preparation

You might want to begin with this prayer:

**My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present  
in the Sacrament.**

**I love you above all  
things, and long for  
you in my soul.**

**Since I cannot now receive you  
sacramentally, come at least  
spiritually into my heart.**

**As though you have already come,  
I embrace you and unite myself entirely to  
you; never permit me to be separated from  
you. Amen.**

*St Alphonsus de Liguori*

Spend some time thinking about this past week and bring before God anything which needs putting right. Say.

**Lord, have mercy.**

**Christ, have  
mercy. Lord,  
have mercy.**

**May the God of love  
forgive and free us from our sins,  
heal and strengthen us by the power of  
the Spirit, and assure us of his eternal  
love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Pray today's prayer (the 'Collect'):

**Assist us mercifully with your help,  
Lord God of our salvation,  
that we may enter with joy  
into the celebration of those mighty acts  
whereby you give us life and immortality;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

## The Word

Read today's Scripture readings:

### **A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians**

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5-11

### **A reading from the gospel according to Matthew**

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so." But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?" But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there

and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.' " The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way. From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

Matthew 27:11-54

## Reflection

Spend some time thinking about these readings from Scripture. Here are some reflections that might help to think about them both today and in the coming week:

- Philippians 2:6-11 is universally accepted as taking the form of a hymn. In this way key aspects of early Christian theology would be communicated and remembered. However, as we read the wonderful expressions of the action and nature of the Lord Jesus we should always bear in mind that the Apostle Paul has placed this hymn in the context of two key themes. The first and perhaps most obvious theme, is the encouragement and challenge for the disciples in Philippi to continue to develop good character. The second key theme here is that of love.
- What then is God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ like? We see God in the life, actions, and form of Jesus. On Palm/Passion Sunday we see God in the actions of humility of the Lord Jesus. Christ humbles himself in order to win our hearts from a position of great weakness, but immense and unbreakable love. At his glorious name all creation shall bow.

- This long and multifaceted Gospel reading depicts God and human beings at cross purposes. The various characters in the narrative provide a vivid portrait of human sinfulness and its consequences. Judas, motivated perhaps by greed, betrays Jesus but then bitterly regrets his action. The disciples, with Peter at the head, long to demonstrate their faithfulness and love but fail miserably. Jesus' opponents—the religious leaders, Pilate, the Roman soldiers, and the crowds—all in their own ways reject, torment, and ridicule Jesus as they seek their own benefit and their own ends. Jesus alone remains fully obedient to God's will, opening the way for God to defeat humanity's death-dealing choices through the paradoxical power of the cross.
- During Jesus' trial, Peter once again exemplifies the disciples' longing and failure to follow Jesus. He observes events from a distance, but overwhelmed by fear, he thrice denies knowing Jesus. At the moment of denial, he not only abandons his Lord but disobeys his teaching in Matthew 5:33–37 by using oaths to swear that he does not even know Jesus. When the cock crows, Peter realizes the truth of Jesus' prophecy and the depth of his own lies. Though he weeps bitterly, he cannot undo what he has done. Does God's mercy extend to Peter?
- Yet once again Jesus' own interpretation of his blood at the Last Supper invites us to hear a deeper meaning in the crowd's words. So many taunts and phrases in the passion story are profoundly ironic. Do the people understand what they are saying? They ask that Jesus' blood be upon them and upon their children. But Jesus says that his blood is poured out for forgiveness (the blood of the sin offering, Leviticus 4:25, 34; 5:9). Does God's mercy extend to those who condemned and executed Jesus?

## Prayer

Hold in your mind the things that concern you most, give thanks for those you love and offer these to God. You may want to pray for:

- The places of darkness and loss in our lives and our world and the grace to know the power of God bringing light and life in that darkness
- All who feel anger, sadness or grief, that they might have peace and comfort
- Our moments of joy in which we can be grateful to G-d
- The Church
- Those who have asked for our prayers
- Creation, human society and those in authority
- The parish community
- All hospital staff and medical researchers
- Those who suffer
- The communion of saints

You could close your time in prayer with this prayer:

**God of the present  
moment, God who in  
Jesus stills the storm  
and soothes the frantic  
heart; bring hope and  
courage to all who wait  
or work in uncertainty.  
Bring hope that you will make them  
the equal of whatever lies ahead.  
Bring them courage to endure what cannot be avoided,  
for your will is health and  
wholeness; you are God, and  
we need You. Amen.**

*Adapted from the New Zealand Prayer Book*

And then conclude with 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.**

Extinguish your candle, if one is lit, and end this time of worship, but keep the Scripture and prayer for the week, and keep returning to them over the days ahead.

**We are praying for each other, by name, daily.**

**G-d bless, stay safe, keep well**

