

Holy Week

MARCH 28–APRIL 7, 2021

You are the son of the Living God

by Roger Gench



HYMN OF THE WEEK: “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded”

PRAYER FOCUS: Sanctification — How can I ask God to make me more into God’s likeness — more generous, forgiving, trusting, caring, creative, just? How can I care more for the “least of these” and less about what people in power think?

ACTION: Each day reflect on a time your mourning turned to joy or growth.

Palm Sunday, MARCH 28, 2021

MARK 11:1–11

Jesus’ triumphal entrance into Jerusalem is ironic. The people want a king who comes with power to deliver them, but Jesus will suffer, be crucified and resurrected, which suggests a different kind of power. Jesus does not come to rule over people but rather to model mutual service with people. The story invites reflection on the reign of God and what it might look like.



Practice: Prayerfully read today’s Scripture with special attention to what it might mean for the reign or reality of God to be present in daily life. What does the commonwealth of God look like for you? How is it present in your community?



Journal: Write in your journal of your answers to these questions, as specifically as you can.


**BLESSED IS THE
ONE WHO COMES
IN THE NAME OF
THE LORD!**




Monday, MARCH 29, 2021

JOHN 13:1-17

The Gospel of John's account of Jesus' last supper with his disciples features a foot-washing — a symbolic act that conveys both the nature of discipleship and the significance of Jesus' death as a sign of his love for his disciples and of his humiliating death on their behalf. Two interpretations of the foot-washing are presented: the first asks us simply to *receive* Christ's act of hospitality (verses 6-11), the second to *extend* it to one another (verses 12-15). The first tends to be overlooked, but receiving Christ's gesture of love and accepting it fully precedes and grounds extension of it to others.


 **Practice:** Read the story slowly and prayerfully at least twice and imagine that you are part of this scene. What do you see? What do you feel? Do you identify with Peter's deep discomfort? Do you find it easier to receive or to extend hospitality — and why?


 **Journal:** Sense the movements of your spirit and the emotions they evoke as you reflected on this story — both movements toward God and away from God — and note in your journal what emerged.

Tuesday, MARCH 30, 2021

MARK 8:27-33

"Who do you say that I am?" In this watershed moment at Caesarea Philippi, we hear Peter's answer to Jesus' question — and also Jesus' rebuke of Peter when he objects to Jesus' prediction of death and resurrection. The story invites us to consider our own response to Jesus' question — and our own reaction to his passion prediction.


 **Practice:** Prayerfully read this text from Mark, placing yourself into the scene. Imagine how you would answer Jesus' question: "Who do you say that I am?" Imagine your response to Jesus' rebuke of Peter.


 **Journal:** Note in your journal your own response to Jesus' question, and to his rebuke.

Wednesday, MARCH 31, 2021

MARK 8:34-38

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." When Jesus exhorts disciples with these words, he is not suggesting that they pick up crosses they do not already bear, but rather that they acknowledge and name the crosses already bearing down upon their own lives and upon those around them — and that they resist all such savage forces. The exhortation invites our reflection on crosses and systemic evils that may bear down on our own lives.


 **Practice:** Read this Scripture slowly and prayerfully, naming the crosses that bear down on your own life and that of your community — and the shape that your resistance to them is taking. Be as specific as you can.


 **Journal:** Briefly note in your journal the crosses in your life and signs of your resistance to them.

Maunder Thursday, APRIL 1, 2021

MARK 14:32-42

In this story, we eavesdrop on Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane on the night before his death and witness the struggle of his disciples to stay awake with him while he prays. What does Jesus' struggle evoke for you? What does the disciples' struggle evoke for you? With whom do you most identify?


 **Practice:** Prayerfully read this story, reflecting on the various struggles it conveys and their impact upon you.


 **Journal:** Sense the movements of your spirit and the emotions that they evoke as you reflect on this story – both movements toward God and away from God – and note in your journal what happens.

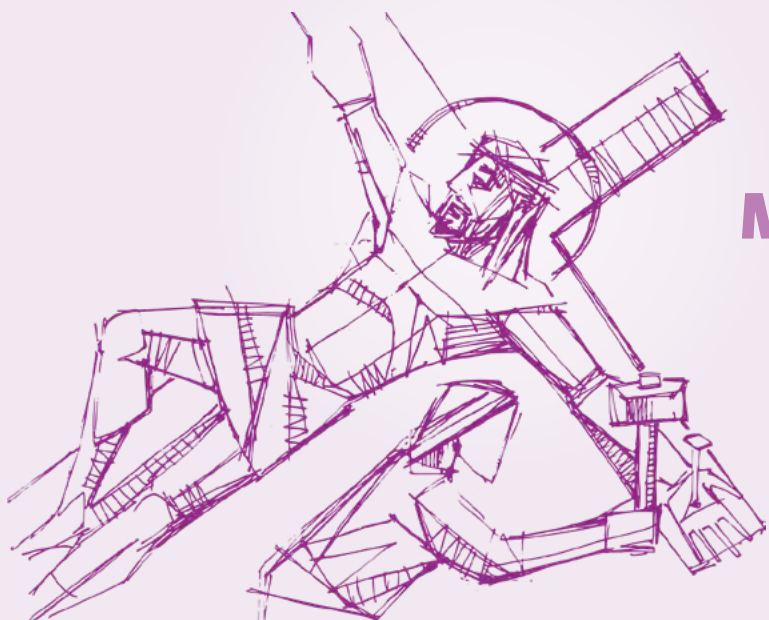
Good Friday, APRIL 2, 2021

MARK 15:33-47

In Mark's account of the crucifixion, Jesus is radically alone as he is publicly humiliated on the cross, subject to mockery. Soldiers ridicule him; passersby deride him, shaking their heads at him; religious authorities mock him; and even those crucified with him taunt him. Jesus' final words from the cross are of abandonment even by God. Roman crucifixions were staged in public places, often along roads where all who passed could witness their horror, as a deterrent to bucking civil authorities. On Good Friday, we are drawn into this public place.

 **Practice:** Prayerfully read this story, imagining that you are present in this public place. Note the senses and emotions the scene evokes as you meditate upon it.

 **Journal:** Painful though it may be, note in your journal what emerged as you prayed with this story.



**MY GOD, MY GOD,
WHY HAVE YOU
FORSAKEN ME?**

Holy Saturday, APRIL 3, 2021

JOHN 20:19-28

Holy Saturday is an occasion on which to reflect on the wounds of Jesus — and on wounds that linger in our own lives. When the risen Lord appears to his disciples, he shows them his hands and his side; Thomas even insists that he must touch the mark of the wounds, and the risen Lord invites him to do so. As theologian Shelly Rambo notes in her book “Resurrecting Wounds,” Jesus directs the attention of his disciples toward the wounds, inviting us to do the same, with a “readiness to hold pain and to stay with difficult truths.”



Practice: Prayerfully read this story with special attention to the wounds of Jesus. Reflect also on wounds that linger in your own life that mark you.



Journal: Note what emerges in your prayer with this story, and of movement toward God and away from God that you discerned.

Easter Sunday, APRIL 4, 2021

MATTHEW 28:1-10

Reflect on the women’s encounter first with the angel of the Lord and then with the Risen Christ. As you read the Scripture, think about how they experience these scenes with all of their physical senses. Imagine how they might have felt and contemplate their actions and responses.



Practice: What have you learned in these weeks of Lent? Are you “ready” for Easter — for meeting the Risen Christ yourself? Think about you how will live into the resurrection in a new way as you go forward into the Easter season.



Journal: Read over your journal entries from these Lenten weeks. What have you learned from thinking so often and deeply about “moving toward” and “moving away” from God? Is this just a pendulum, or does it bring a new awareness of your proximity to Christ? Note your observations and summarize what you have learned. List any practices you commit to continuing.

Christ is risen!
Christ is risen
indeed!

