

Lent and Easter

Holy Week prayers

AIM

To provide some prayers and meditation that can be used by individuals or groups during the first part of Holy Week. A second document contains material for the second part of the week.

MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

INTRODUCTION

Jesus has just been hailed as “he who comes in the name of the lord!” He’d been blessed, worshipped and honoured. There had been excitement, victorious talk and joy. Now the atmosphere begins to change. How quickly this can happen! This meditation expresses sadness at how easily we let God’s presence and purposes melt away – often unnoticed.

Heaven and earth are so close

Heaven and earth are so close –
so close that sometimes they touch!

God breaks into our lives
more often than we admit.

Heaven filters down to earth
more frequently than we expect.

God’s throne room
is accessible.

But we have our eyes on the ground –
the heartache,
the struggles,
the busyness,
the anxiety of the world
keep us from seeing the truth.

Lent and Easter

Holy Week prayers

We have no time to know the hovering of God

so close we could touch or see or hear.

If only, if only, if only we would sense Him

so close, so close, so close.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW UP

Some questions to ponder:

- Where or how do you most keenly sense God's presence or something you think might be 'a touch of heaven'?
- What helps you notice?
- How long does the memory or effect last?
- Can you do anything to increase the frequency or depth of this experience and is that possible or even desirable in your opinion?
- Do your experiences of God lead to a greater level of commitment and service or are they a distraction; unreal and impractical?
- If you've never had such an experience, do you want to and how do you think you might encounter God?
- What makes you feel really alive? Could that be a spiritual experience?
- Do you have anyone you can talk to about these matters? If not, do you want to do anything about that?

The Benedictine tradition, Practicing the Presence of God in all things, may be pertinent here. For them, there is no divide between sacred and secular activities. They acknowledge that the whole of their day is lived in God's presence. This may be something you wish to follow up.

These questions and suggestions can be used as a springboard to discussion in small groups. Any that are unhelpful can be omitted and any others that come up in conversation can be included.

It's important to be sensitive to people's input as it will be very personal and the contributors can easily feel vulnerable. It's probably best to receive all offers of personal experience by showing interest and acceptance, as spiritual encounters are very individual. Request everyone in the small groups to speak only of their own experiences and offer opinions only about their own experiences. Ask folks only to comment on other contributions if they are affirming them or showing positive interest; it is not appropriate to debate the validity of individual experiences!

Lent and Easter

Holy Week prayers

TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

INTRODUCTION

Jesus was often misunderstood, but all he wanted was to share God's heart with the world. As the climax of his life on earth approached, he shared more and more of his heart with the disciples. How hard was that for him I wonder? But he never gave up trying. Let's ponder God's heart:

God's Heart

God's heart is big and flexible,
Letting love in and out.

Not small and shrivelled,
Having given all its love away.
Or cold and hard,
Keeping all its love inside.

No, God's heart is big and flexible,
And he wants to give us hearts like that too.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW UP

It may be a good idea to read this several times over.

Give yourself some time and space to ponder the different kinds of heart and what effect they have on us.

God is offering us a heart transplant here. This offer is made several times in Scripture. Do you want a heart that is big and flexible? Are you ready to receive? Just ask, and the procedure will begin. Keep asking until God has completed this work he's beginning in you.

In a group setting it may be helpful to have several different people read this meditation out at intervals, giving people time to digest the ideas presented.

A large group could then break into small groups to share responses and pray together – see suggestions in paragraphs two and three above.

Lent and Easter

Holy Week prayers

WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

INTRODUCTION

This is a week of struggle for Jesus. Passions rising, fear increasing, danger threatening, treachery looming. But Jesus **chose** to take the route of pain and passion – we see that in his struggles in the Garden of Gethsemane. So he understands what it's like to have battles raging both inwardly and around him. Any battles we have can therefore be admitted to him. He not only understands how difficult they are for us, he also knows how to help. We can be permeated by his presence until every jagged thought and every confused perspective is saturated by his love, peace and wisdom. And don't be deceived, God's peace is no marshmallow experience – it's a strong deep sense of security, something powerful to hold onto. It will bring us through – as it brought Jesus through the terrible ordeal to come.

FROM BROKENNESS TO RESTORATION

- a journey with Jesus

Broken hearts;

Jesus is present.

Unsettled people;

Jesus is present.

Sadness and disappointment;

Jesus is present.

Grief and shock;

Jesus is present.

Jesus knows all these feelings –

He has experienced them Himself.

In His presence, we can let them surface,

it is safe and we can be healed.

In Jesus' presence

brokenness is the path to intimacy with Him;

pain and passion was the route He chose.

Lent and Easter

Holy Week prayers

Jesus did this and can lead us on the journey
from death to resurrection.

His presence with us is the proof
that the journey is both possible and worthwhile.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW UP

Do you have any situations in life where it feels there is no hope, you give up?

Think of personal situations and things worldwide.

Try asking for Jesus' presence into these situations. Wait a while and in your imagination picture Jesus in the situations, with the people, his presence filling them and their surroundings. Think about that strong sense of peace and security flowing. Ask for his wisdom and insight.

What difference do you perceive?

Do you believe Jesus can restore some of this brokenness or bring life back where it seems there is none?

Turn your longings into intercessory prayer. Give Jesus a chance to intervene and see what transpires.

In a group setting these questions and suggestions could lead to intercessory prayer – in small groups if it seems more suitable. You might find the singing of a chant like 'Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom' could fit as a response to these prayers.

EVALUATION

Please try to answer these questions for yourself and for others who will use this material:

1. What was the most helpful thing?
2. What was the least helpful thing?
3. What would you like to try now?

THE NEXT STEP

If you want more seasonal items for Lent and Easter please revisit the website.

Acknowledgements

This material is copyright to Ruth Sermon who has given permission for it to be used in the Vision4life process. Please address any other requests for use to admin@vision4life.org.uk

HOW TO FEEDBACK TO VISION4LIFE?

If you wish to offer any feedback – brickbats and bouquets are equally welcome! – you can do so in various ways.

Lent and Easter



Holy Week prayers

You can email the Vision4Life steering group about general or website V4L issues via the website or at admin@vision4life.org.uk

If you have comments and particularly contributions to the prayer year, you can email the V4L prayer year coordinator via prayer@vision4life.org.uk

If you want to make contributions or ask questions about other V4L years you can email:

Year 3 – Transformed for Evangelism: evangelism@vision4life.org.uk