



Opening Responses

As the day draws into its close,
we gather to watch and to pray.

Open our hearts and ready our lips, O God,
and our mouths shall proclaim your praise.

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

Space for Silent Reflection on the Past Day

Prayers of Renewal

Jesus told his disciples that if they wanted to follow him,
they needed to deny themselves, and take up their crosses.
God calls us into that same movement
of dying to sin and rising again with Christ.
In this quiet space for reflection,
let us bring to God those things in need of renewal:

We bring to you those things for which we are sorry:
Restore us and heal us.

We bring to you the times we've failed to love one another:
Restore us and heal us.

We bring to you the burdens we carry and sorrows we bear:
Restore us and heal us.

We bring to you the injustices and oppression in our world:
Restore us and heal us.

We bring to you the failings and disunity of your Church:
Restore us and heal us.

God of our journeys and false starts and new beginnings,
you walk with us all of our days,
and nothing in life or death or all creation
can separate us from your love in Jesus Christ.

Thank you that you forgive us our faults and mistakes,
share with us in our worries and struggles,
and lead us onwards into fullness of life.

We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus.

Amen

An Evening Hymn

Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the world, we pray
That with thy wonted favour thou
Wouldst be our guard and keeper now.

From all ill dreams defend our eyes
From nightly fears and fantasies;
Tread underfoot our ghostly foe
That no pollution we may know.

O Father, that we ask be done
Through Jesus Christ, thine only Son
Who, with the Holy Ghost and thee,
doth live and reign eternally. Amen

Psalm of the Day – Psalm 70

At the end of the psalm, the following is said:

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

Reading Luke 22:1 – 6

Reflection

The subject of today's text is unequivocal. It describes the betrayal, by one of his closest friends in the person of Judas Iscariot, of Jesus in what Luke portrays as the day before what we now name Maundy Thursday. This is a passage which may trigger painful memories for many people. Some of us will know first-hand what it feels like to be betrayed, to be badly let down by somebody we care about who we thought was on our side. The resulting breakdown of trust can prove difficult, if not impossible, to repair. On the other hand, some among us may have betrayed another, whether inadvertently or otherwise, who cared about us and thought we were on their side. The impacts of our betrayal will depend upon whether and how it was discovered and by whom, but the guilt involved can stay with us for years, even decades in some instances. Whether you have experienced one or both of these scenarios, today's text is good news because God-in-Christ is there both for sinners and the sinned against.

We tend to focus during Holy Week on the former category, on God forgiving the sins of those who are willing to own the consequences of their actions and commit to living in a Kingdom-orientated way in the future. While we have to face up to the impacts of betraying trust and God does not spare us from having to deal with the fallouts and

hurt we have caused, God also does not cut us off as a result. Jesus dying on the cross shows us just how seriously God takes sin, which destroys relationships, and fuels systemic injustice. Quite literally, it proves God was willing to put her body where her hope is. However, that is not the end of the story. Not only does Christ's love open the pathway to forgiveness, but it also reveals a compassionate Saviour who knows what it feels like to be sinned against. Our God is equally concerned with healing our wounds and forgiving our sins, because God is ultimately concerned with human flourishing and wholeness.

Thus, as we continue our journey through Holy Week and come yet again to the foot of the cross, we take a path toward that wholeness, that fullness and abundance of life, that Jesus lived, loved, died and rose again to make possible. We can lay before God the hurts which we have suffered, and the hurts we have caused, trusting that we're known and loved completely. In his letter to the Romans, Paul notes that nothing in life, death, or all creation can separate us from God's love in Christ, and he truly means it. We cannot do anything to make God love us any more or less than God already does, and that gives us a solid and secure basis upon which to build. It's true that we are called to leave behind sinful ways of being and that repentance is a vital part of Christian discipleship, but so is recognising the depth of God's love for us and our worth in God's eyes. Moreover, this being true for me and for you means it is also true for everybody else, too. To follow Jesus is to put love for our neighbour into practice – even, and perhaps especially, when that neighbour is not easy to love, as it seems Judas proved himself to be.

So, as we continue on our journey towards the foot of the cross, let us go forward boldly trusting that God knows both our faults and our pain, and that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ.

Responding to the Word

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

For you have redeemed me, 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.

Canticle – The Song of Simeon (Nunc Dimittis)

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.

**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

Prayers of Intercession

The following Collect is said at the end of the intercessions:

Almighty God,
as we stand at the foot of the cross of your Son,
help us to see and 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

A Prayer of Journeying On

As you journey onwards in God's love,
towards the foot of the cross of Christ,
may you step forward boldly and act justly,
so that through you, all may know that they matter.
And the blessing of God,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you, and all whom you love and pray for,
now and for ever. **Amen**