

Online Morning Worship

Passion Sunday 2020

Welcome to our worship on this Passion Sunday.
Welcome to those who are joining us for the first time.
We hope you will find this morning's liturgy helpful this challenging time.

Opening responses

Creator of the world, eternal God

All: We have come from many places for a little while

Redeemer of humanity, God with us

All: We have come with all our differences and all our questions, seeking common ground

Spirit of unity, God with us

All: We have come on journeys of our own, to a place where journeys meet

So here, in this moment, let us take time together.

For when paths cross and pilgrims gather, there is much to share and celebrate

All: Blessed be God for ever.

The Collect

Gracious Father,
you gave up your Son
out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

¹A certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' ⁴But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' ⁵Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' ⁸The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' ⁹Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' ¹¹After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' ¹²The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' ¹³Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' ¹⁶Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met

him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' ²³Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' ²⁴Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' ²⁵Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' ²⁷She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

²⁸When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' ²⁹And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³²When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' ³⁵Jesus began to weep. ³⁶So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' ³⁷But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

³⁸Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.' ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' ⁴¹So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' ⁴³When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

⁴⁵Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

REFLECTION FOR PASSION SUNDAY

Much has changed over the past week as steps have been taken to try to contain the Corona Virus. Many of us have spent more time than we usually do in our own homes – for some that will have been a blessing, for some a challenge.

This morning's gospel finds Jesus at the home of his friends Mary and Martha at a challenging and distressing time. And for those familiar with Christ Church you may be reminded of the painting here in the Lady Chapel by our friend Rob Floyd.

Martha and Mary and their brother Lazarus had offered Jesus much in the way of hospitality throughout his ministry – something countless people are seeking to do during this time of crisis as they seek to help others in whatever way they can. Our Foodbank this week was busy, with volunteers and clients – each in their own way offering and seeking hospitality.

Today's gospel is long and powerful and brings us right to the heart of this season of Passiontide. There are many people and many voices within it, but the one who stands out from the crowd is Martha, a woman whom Jesus loved. She speaks here in the immediate moments after her much loved brother has died. She's longed for Jesus to come and make everything alright, but he hasn't. The worst has happened.

When Jesus eventually arrives, Martha opens her heart to him. She gives him both her grief and her faith. For Martha, the two don't cancel each other out, but exist side by side. We see a woman in

the midst of grief, standing in a place of faith, and she makes two extraordinary statements. First she tells Jesus "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask him." Then, she goes on to make an astonishing statement of faith "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

Church history, being what is, has placed much more emphasis on Peter's declaration of faith than on Martha's. But hers is just as great, if not greater, given the experience she is speaking out of.

So often, we find our life experience too difficult to make faith seem possible – something we may be experiencing at the moment as we seek to try and understand what's happening to our world and the people in it. But Martha shows us another way. She knows that, standing before her, despite what's happened, is the Lord of heaven and earth. In one hand she holds her life, with all its pain and bereavement and confusion, and in the other she holds her faith in God. For Martha, and for us, God is still God. Faith is still faith. The path continues.

Lead us on our journey from Eggs and Ashes *Compilation c 2004 Ruth Burgess and Chris Polhill*

God, our God, you have called us to be a people on the move;
travelling light, dying to live,
ready to lose ourselves for the sake of the world.

You have called us to be a people with a purpose;
travelling without a map, travelling to where we are led,
sustained by your Spirit, committed to the gospel for the hope of the world.

Move us on our journey from where we are to where you want us to go.
open our eyes on the way
to the people of different cultures, continents and countries,
who can bring colour to our lives.

Take us on a journey
from where we are to what you want us to be;
so that we become a community
where all are welcomed and no one is excluded,
all are valued and no one is made to feel inadequate,
all are forgiven and no one is ashamed to belong,
all are encouraged and no one is too hurt to come among us.

Lead us on our journey
from who we are to who you want us to be;
so that patience is built into us,
kindness is assumed in us,
gentleness is part of us,
compassion flows from us,
truth is second nature to us,
and the commitment to live is part of us.

Let us go gladly on the journey towards Easter –
the journey towards death and resurrection.
Let us journey in the peace and power of the Spirit.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In your loving-kindness, O God

Have mercy and hear our prayer.

Jesus, our resurrection and our life, raise our vision and centre it on your eternity. Breathe into you Church your life-giving Spirit and make us a dwelling place for you.

In your loving-kindness, O God

Have mercy and hear our prayer.

Jesus, our resurrection and our life, look with compassion on your world. We continue our prayers for those affected by the Corona Virus and pray for all seeking to contain it. In our own country we pray for the NHS, and all who put their lives at risk for the sake of others. And in our own community we pray for our local residential care homes – for our friends in Ashley House, Holmfield and Monet Lodge – for residents and staff. And for those who care for the elderly and vulnerable in their own homes.

In your loving-kindness, O God

Have mercy and hear our prayer.

Jesus, our resurrection and our life, draw together into one body dispersed and fractured people. Connect the strands of society uniting people of all races, ages and gender. Dwell among us that we may behold your glory.

In your loving-kindness, O God

Have mercy and hear our prayer.

Jesus, our resurrection and our life, be with all who are ill in body, mind or spirit.....

Reveal your glory in our frailty.

In your loving-kindness, O God

Have mercy and hear our prayer.

Jesus, our resurrection and our life, you restore life where it has been lost, and we rejoice in the warmth of your love.

May we hear you call us from the place of death to delight in your new creation. We remember those who have died recently, and those we have loved but see no longer.

In your loving-kindness, O God

Have mercy and hear our prayer.

We join all our prayers together in the prayer that Jesus taught us.

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.

HYMN

My song is love unknown,
My Saviour's love to me;
Love to the loveless shown,
That they might lovely be.
O who am I,
That for my sake
My Lord should take
Frail flesh, and die?

Sometimes they strew His way,
And His sweet praises sing;
Resounding all the day
Hosannas to their King:
Then "Crucify!"
Is all their breath,
And for His death
They thirst and cry.

Here might I stay and sing,
No story so divine;
Never was love, dear King,
Never was grief like Thine.
This is my Friend,
In whose sweet praise
I all my days

BLESSING

The Peace of God, which passes all understanding fill our hearts and minds with the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. And the blessing....

Let us go in peace, to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen.