

SEASON OF LENT—PALM SUNDAY 28 March, 2021



**“Abba, Father, for you
all things are possible;
remove this cup from me;
yet, not what I want,
but what you want.”**

—Jesus in the garden

Opening Sentences—verses from Psalm 31

From the waters of birth to my eternal rest,
I trust in you, for you are my God.

My time is in your hand,
keep me from anxiety and resignation.

In this shifting season of decreasing light,
shine on me and save me with your steadfast love.

Opening Prayer

Strong and Enduring Love, with and for us always:

I come as a seeker,
longing and searching for a life-giving way.

I wish to be a person
of compassion, kindness, truth and justice.

I come in need of reassurance and renewal
for we are all stumblers,
vulnerable to doubting our souls
and corruption of the heart.

So, send your Spirit to me, O Christ,
to flow within and between all things.

Reveal the path of Jesus
and give me the will and strength
to follow in his footsteps of love.

Amen

ENCOUNTERING THE LIVING WORD

Gospel Reading—Mark 11:1–10, 14:12–42

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’”

They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes
in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the coming kingdom
of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, “Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?” So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks, “Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’” He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.”

So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal. When it was evening, Jesus came with the twelve. And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.” They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, “Surely, not I?” He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.”

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.” And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.” He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. He came a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

Going Deeper

Jesus' heartfelt prayer in the garden is an example of abandonment and obedience. The root meaning of the word obedience is "to stretch toward."

- Ask the Spirit to reveal an aspect of your life where you might "stretch toward" God's love and the things of God more fully.
- What practical application might this have? Is there some change you might make?

Sleep and wakefulness are metaphors in the Gospel. They are images of spiritual attentiveness, a willingness to notice and stay present to what is, an acceptance of God's will in each moment (or not in the case of our sleepiness). Contemplation was once described by someone as "a long loving look at the real." This way of being gets at the heart of what Jesus asks of his disciples.

- How do you give into your "sleepiness" at times? What habits, distractions, fears keep you from a long loving look at the real and what is the impact of this?
- What enables you to be more awake to reality?



Abandonment, has nothing to do with warmth of womb or arms or closed clasped hearts. It is committed only with and in the maturity of Christ Jesus. It is not just a hanging loose. It is a letting go. It is a severing of the strings by which one manipulates, controls, administers the forces in one's life. Abandonment is managing nothing, expecting nothing, blocking or blotting out nothing. Abandonment is receiving all things the way one receives a gift: With opened hands, an opened heart.

—anonymous

RESPONDING WITH OUR LIVES

Prayers of the People

God of the Palm Branch: for those who feel rejected or abandoned because of different ways, thoughts or status, may we be for them the carriers of the jar of baptised water, leading all people to the Source of unconditional love. We pray: may your will be done in us, O God.

For bogged down decisions waiting to be replaced with Spirit-filled certainty flowing towards justice, compassion and peace, enlighten all who are in leadership. We pray: may your will be done in us, O God.

(cont.)

For those who have turned their heart from you, we yearn for your reconciliation as we pray:
may your will be done in us, O God.

As death looms over us this week and sorrow burrows into our bones, heal us with your
resurrection love. We pray: may your will be done in us, O God.

Disciples' Prayer

Life-Giver, Pain-Bearer, Love-Maker.
Source of all that is and that shall be.
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echo
through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed
by all peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done
by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.

Blessing

When the path of discipleship is hard and steep
may we be heartened knowing Jesus has travelled this path too.

We do not make the journey alone
and become stronger by our togetherness.

A Great Goodness is with and for us
so let us go forth in trust to give our all to love.