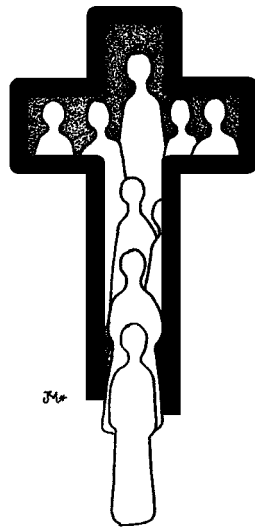


**Prayer
with
the Sunday Readings**
for individuals and small groups

**Passion Sunday through the
Sixth Sunday of Easter
2009**



What She Has Done
Passion Sunday
April 5, 2009

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Almighty God, Ruler of Heaven and Earth
 Christ Jesus, Redeemer
 Holy Spirit, Counselor to the Disciples

All: Open our hearts to your word. Guide us in your ways.

Scripture Reading: Mark: 3-9

While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger, "Why was the ointment wasted in this way? For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they scolded her. But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. What is it that this woman has done that makes her action such an intrinsic part of the gospel message?
2. How is she a model of discipleship?
3. What can we, as modern-day disciples, learn from her example?

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: May the story of Jesus' passion and death ground us in awesome gratitude for the overwhelming graciousness of our God. Let us pray in Jesus' name.

All: Suffering Servant, receive our prayer.

Leader: May the lives we lead and the people we become be a fitting and glorious response to the divine love Jesus has shown us.

All: Suffering Servant, receive our prayer.

Leader: May we listen with open hearts to the stories of discipleship of all faithful women and men, past and present, as they break open for us the meaning of the gospel message.

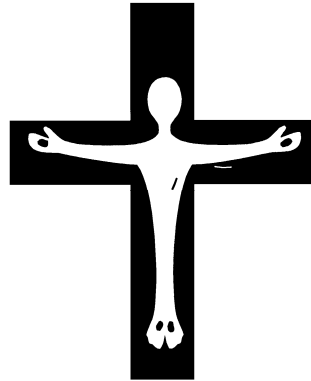
All: Suffering Servant, receive our prayer.

Leader: For what else shall we pray...

(When all are finished offering prayers)

For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts.

All: Suffering Servant, receive our prayer.



Closing Prayer

Leader: The closing prayer tonight is a single line of affirmation, the faith-filled words Jesus spoke in the darkest hours of his commitment to proclaim the gospel message. I will say the words that Jesus said at the Garden of Gethsemane: "Abba, all things are possible to you." We will take a moment of silence to take in Jesus' prayer. Each of you is then invited to respond from your own heart repeating the words: "Abba, all things are possible to you." And we will end together with "Amen."

Leader: *Abba, all things are possible to you.*

(When all who choose to do so have voiced the affirmation: "Abba, all things are possible to you.)

Let us pray.

All: Amen.

Witnesses
Easter Sunday
April 12, 2009

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Let us pray...

Women: Give glory to Our God the Lord Almighty.

Men: We praise you, Lord God of Mercies.

Women: Give glory to Our Merciful God.

Men: We praise you, Lord Jesus, our brother and friend.

Women: Give glory to Our God who invites us into Love.

Men: We praise you, O God. Your love is everlasting.

All: Amen.

Scripture Reading: Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Peter began to speak and said:

“You know what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

“We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

“He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Silent Reflection

Question for Faith Sharing

We are witnesses that the Risen Christ continues in our day to heal the oppressed and to do good. If you were called upon to testify to the redeeming power of Jesus Christ in your life, what experience or reflection on your own life would you share?



Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In the name of Jesus, grant us forgiveness, and let the peace of Christ reign. Grant that we grow in intimacy with you as more and more we come to recognize your presence and action in our lives. Let us pray...

All: Lord, receive our prayer.

Leader: Grant that the power of Christ be made visible through us. Let us pray...

All: Lord, receive our prayer.

Leader: For what else shall we pray?
(When all who choose to do so are finished voicing their prayers)
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts...

All: Lord, receive our prayer.

Closing Prayer

**All: Glory to God in the Highest
Sing glory to God
Glory to God in the Highest
And peace to God's people on earth.**

Life in a Changing Community
Second Sunday of Easter
April 19, 2009

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Let us pray...

**All: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.
Enkindle in us the fire of your divine love.
Send forth your spirit and we shall be recreated,
and you shall renew the face of the earth. Amen.**

Scripture Reading: John 20: 19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

We are experiencing the Pascal Mystery, the pattern of dying and rising, as we live through the many changes occurring in our faith communities.

1. As our church community has undergone change, can you recall an unexpected experience of Christ's presence?
2. Envisioning our emerging parish life, what doubts do I have?
3. What would help me believe in the best possible outcome?



Intercessory Prayers

Leader: Loving God, give us a clear vision of the new life you are creating in this parish. Let us pray...

All: Breathe your Holy Spirit into us.

Leader: Lord, we believe, help our unbelief. Let us pray...

All: Breathe your Holy Spirit into us.

Leader: For what else shall we pray?

(When all who choose to do so are finished voicing their prayers)

For these and all those we hold deep in our hearts, let us pray...

All: Breathe your Holy Spirit into us.

Closing Prayer

Leader: I invite you to sit quietly again for a few minutes (pause)
Be aware of your breathing...
With every inhalation you take, imagine God is exhaling-
God is breathing life into you...
Breathing God's own Spirit into you...

Let us now offer each other a sign of Christ's peace.

The Body of Christ
3rd Sunday of Easter
April 26, 2009

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Jesus, our teacher,
open our eyes that we might see you standing in our midst.
Open our hearts that we might be encouraged by your compassion.
Open our minds that we might understand the word you have for us today.

All: Amen.

Scripture Reading: Luke 24: 35-48

Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost.

He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While they were still incredulous for joy and were amazed, he asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?"

They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**



Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. Sometimes spirituality appears awfully ethereal. What gives a believer's faith flesh and bones?
2. In what ways does our faith community make the body of Christ real and touchable?
3. In what ways does our community need to grow in vitality?

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: May we always remember that we were created in Love, let us pray...

All: Gracious God, hear our prayer.

Leader: May we always remember that we were redeemed by Love, let us pray...

All: Gracious God, hear our prayer.

Leader: May we always remember that we are called to be Love for one another, let us pray...

All: Gracious God, hear our prayer.

Leader: For what else shall we pray?

(When all who choose to do so are finished voicing their prayers)
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts, let us pray...

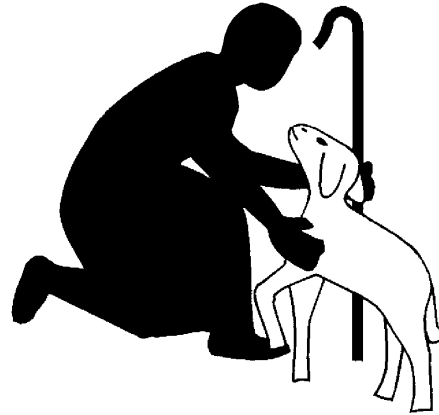
All: Gracious God, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

Leader: Let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us-

**All: 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.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.**

**The Good Shepherd
4th Sunday of Easter
May 3, 2009**



Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Gracious God, we are gathered together in Jesus' name.
We are ready and willing to follow you wherever you lead us.
Open our hearts to hear your voice as we listen to your Word.

All: We are listening, O God, listening for your voice. Amen.

Scripture Reading: John 10: 11-18

Jesus said:

“I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

Few Americans today have any life experience of shepherds....

1. In what way does the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd touch you?
2. What is the image of Jesus that is most connected to your prayer life?

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: Gracious God, protect us and keep us from harm. Amidst the tumult and noise in our lives, may we always recognize your voice, let us pray to the Lord.

All: Caring Shepherd, hear the prayer of your flock.

Leader: For what else shall we pray?

(When all who choose to do so have voiced their prayers)

For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts, let us pray to the Lord.

All: Caring Shepherd, hear the prayer of your flock.

Closing Prayer

Leader: *(Ask your group each to read one line, beginning with the person on your left then moving around the group till the psalm is completed.)*

Let us pray...

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil;

for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me.

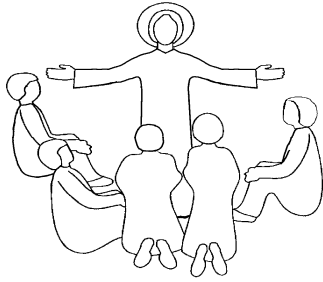
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

All: Amen.



Church
5th Sunday of Easter
May 10, 2009

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Let us call to mind that we are gathered here in the name of Jesus and in his name we pray...

All: **Gracious God, bless our meeting.**
Guide us to your desires.
Open our hearts to receive your word.
Fill us with the Spirit to do your work. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Acts 9: 26-31

Reader 1 When Saul arrived in Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took charge of him and brought him to the apostles, and he described for them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.

Reader 2 So he went in and out among them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He spoke and debated with the Hellenists; but they tried to kill him. When the believers learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

Reader 3 Meanwhile the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace. It was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. How do you react to new people who want to join established groups, especially those people with strong, vocal personalities and big ideas like Paul?
2. Can you picture what the early church was like? How would you describe it?
3. Do you think our parish has anything in common with these early faith communities? If so, what?

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: May church leaders be blessed with wisdom, let us pray to the Lord...

All: Lord, receive our prayer.

Leader: May the church be blessed with bold and enthusiastic disciples who joyfully bring the good news of Jesus the Christ beyond the doors of our churches out into God's world, let us pray to the Lord...

All: Lord, receive our prayer.

Leader: May our parish be blessed with the consolation of the Holy Spirit, and grow in faith and in numbers, let us pray to the Lord...

All: Lord, receive our prayer.

Leader: For what else shall we pray?

(When all who choose to do so have voiced their prayers)

For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts, let us pray to the Lord...

All: Lord, receive our prayer.

Closing Prayer

Leader: St. Paul...

All: pray for us.

Leader: St. Barnabas...

All: pray for us.

Leader: Saints of Judea, of Galilee, of Samaria...

All: pray for us.

Leader: Holy disciples, our brothers and sisters through the ages...

All: pray for us.

Leader: Pray for us that we may walk in the love of God and continue to build the church in Jesus' name.

All: Amen.

The Love of God
6th Sunday of Easter
May 17, 2009

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Let us pray...

**All: Loving God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer,
from the beginning of time to the ends of eternity
you open your heart to us; you pour out divine love upon us.
You forgive us when we fail to accept your love.
You show us how to grow in your love.
Instruct us by your holy word.
We are listening; we want to learn.
Amen.**

Scripture Reading: 1 John 4: 7-10

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God;
everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.
God's love was revealed among us in this way:
God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him.
In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us
and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Silent Reflection

(You may wish to incorporate this time into the lectio divina practice described below)

Suggestion for Faith Sharing

Leader: So often we don't take time to rest deeply in the love God has for us. I invite you to take some time now to sit and rest with God and to open yourself to the movement of this amazing Scripture within you.

I will proclaim a portion of the passage we just heard. A period of silence will follow. We will repeat this sequence two more times- three times in all.

Leader: ***In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us
and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins***
Silent Reflection

Leader: *In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us
and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins*
Silent Reflection

Leader: *In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us
and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins*
Silent Reflection

Leader: I invite you to share one or two words that express your response to what
you have heard...

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: May God's love for us sink into the core of our being and ground us in
Christ's ineffable peace, let us pray to the Lord...

All: Loving God, we place our trust in you.

Leader: May God's love for us move us to know, love, and serve God with all our
hearts, let us pray to the Lord...

All: Loving God, we place our trust in you.

Leader: For what else shall we pray?
(When all who wish to do so have voiced their prayers)
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts, let us pray...

All: Loving God, we place our trust in you.

Closing Prayer

Leader: Let us pray in the words of Thomas Merton...

All: My Lord God...
**I do not really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following
your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.**
**But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you and
I hope that I have that desire in all that I am doing.**
And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road.
**You are ever with me and you will never leave me to face my perils
alone. Amen**

