take up your cross

lenten meditations 2010
take up your cross
lent 2010

a meditation guide for students and all young adults especially those in the U.S. military

Young Adult and Campus Ministries
The Episcopal Church Center
To receive Lenten meditations electronically, please send an email with your e-mail address as the subject line and “join meditations” in the body to mharewood@episcopalchurch.org

As preparations are made for the 2010 Advent meditation guide your submissions are welcomed. We want young adult voices from across the church to be heard. If you wish to write in a language other than English, please include a translation. Choose a scripture verse as a focus, write a brief reflection/meditation (personal experience always reads well), and add a sentence with a prayer. Your submission should be no more than 250 words in total. Include your name, diocese and/or school and/or rank, if you’re in military service.

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If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

—Mark 8:34

What does it look like to “take up your cross” this Lent? Most of us don’t have big, heavy, wooden beams lying around our apartments, dorm rooms, houses or barracks. We do, however, carry burdens. Life makes sure of that. We have the burdens of debt, of not-so-smart choices, of difficult relationships, of disease, stress, addiction, transition, and uncertainty. These burdens can keep us from living into the stature of Christ, the image of God in which we were created. This Lent we invite you both to lay down those burdens and to take them up, to face them and walk through them with Christ.

Lent began as a time of preparation for baptism among early Christians. It was a time for learning new ways of life and leaving old behind. It was a time of building community and preparing oneself for right relationship with God. This Lent we invite you to join others around the world in a season of self-examination, prayer, and learning. Walk this path with those around you and with those far off who are also using this guide.

Inside you will find two sections. The first is called the Stations of the Cross. Artists and writers have created fourteen stations to
remember the road Christ walked from the Garden at Gethsemane to the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Each step is reflected in image and words. Traditionally the stations are walked each Friday during Lent, particularly on Good Friday. We invite you to walk them as often as you like this Lent, remembering Jesus’ Passion and considering what it means to follow in his footsteps.

The second section of this guide contains meditations for Holy Week, the days from Palm Sunday and Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem through the last supper on Maundy Thursday, his death on Good Friday and culminating on Holy Saturday. The guide concludes with the celebration of the resurrection on Easter Day. This week constitutes the central focus of the Christian year and contains most of the central themes of the Christian faith. We invite you to set this time aside in whatever way you can and to walk with us through Holy Week to Easter Day.

May God bless you and keep you this Lenten season.

_The Committee for Young Adult Ministry_
We glory in your cross, O Lord, 
and praise and glorify your holy resurrection; 
for by virtue of your cross 
joy has come to the whole world.

May God be merciful to us and bless us, 
show us the light of his countenance, and come to us.

Let your ways be known upon earth, 
your saving health among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; 
let all the peoples praise you.

We glory in your cross, O Lord, 
and praise and glorify your holy resurrection; 
for by virtue of your cross 
joy has come to the whole world.

Anthem for Good Friday
The Book of Common Prayer, page 281
The First Station
Jesus is Condemned to Death

Answering again, Pilate said to them, “Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?” They shouted back, “Crucify Him!” But Pilate said to them, “Why, what evil has He done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify Him!”

—Mark 15: 12-14

Indecisiveness. How many times have you over-contemplated an insignificant decision? What shoes to wear or what movie to see? I have more times than I care to admit. More upsetting is the comparatively little time I have spent on making much more important decisions: where should I worship or how much money should I give? Those decisions, the ones that actually have a larger effect, are met with simple answers.

In this passage we see priests who quickly decide that Jesus is a fraud and is a threat to their station. We see Pilate choose to do what is best for him politically as he listens to an ill-informed crowd. We all have to deal with the repercussions of our decisions. Take a moment to reflect on your own decisions and think about how those decisions affect others.

P’tricia Egbert, Diocese of Kentucky

Dear Lord, help us to hear you. When we drift into the shadows of malcontent and common ignorance, let your wisdom and love guide us back to the path you have intended for us. Amen.
The Second Station

Jesus Takes Up His Cross

And they began to call out to him, “Hail, king of the Jews!” Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

—Mark 15: 18-20

As the crowd gathered they laughed as Jesus carried his own cross. They mocked him and delighted in his despair. There have been great social advances over the past two-thousand years, but we, as human beings, have changed very little. There are people today who make their living mocking others, whom they perceive as having one flaw or another. While these flaws are undeniable, human beings are capable of many extraordinary things. I invite you to take a moment and evaluate your strengths. Consider what you can do to create an extraordinary world around you.

P’tricia Egbert, Diocese of Kentucky

Loving Father, thank you for the gifts you have bestowed on me and these around me. Help me to apply those gifts to better your world and to designate my place in it. Amen.
Miranda Hassett, Diocese of New Hampshire
The Third Station
*Jesus Falls the First Time Under the Cross*

Perseverance is one of the most admirable human qualities. Even when we’re not the ones doing the persevering, we like people who keep fighting the odds. Jesus, as he does in so many things, embodies this very human quality in a way that is, in its completeness, divine. He falls under the weight of the cross, the cross on which he knows he is shortly going to die a brutal death. And then he gets up and he stumbles on. He knows where he’s going, he knows why he’s going there, and being human, he must have been so afraid. But he still gets up.

It’s easy to recognize the big moments of perseverance in our lives. But Jesus shows us that we can (and should) celebrate and give thanks for every moment that we stumble on through this life – when we make it through a difficult morning commute without being discourteous to any of the drivers around us, when we treat a difficult colleague or roommate with respect, when we make it to an 8 a.m. class.

Jesus couldn’t have known for sure that his walk with the cross would have been remembered by so many people, that it would have mattered. He did it anyway. May we, too, persevere in doing what is right, regardless of the reward.

Nicole Seiferth, Diocese of New York

God, help us to persevere in following Jesus in this life. And when we stumble, and fall, help us to stand back up and keep going. In your name. Amen.
The Fourth Station

Jesus Meets his Afflicted Mother

So much about Jesus’ story is a balance between his humanity and his divinity. And all that began with Mary accepting the role of his mother and all that came with that. She’s a touchstone throughout his life, like all good mothers. And she’s a reflection of his humanity. What passed between them when they met on his way to the cross? It’s a very private thing to contemplate, even when you imagine the crowd that would have surrounded them. I doubt there were words or, if there were, that they were the poetic kind the Gospel writers would have wanted to record. There would have been pain there and so much love. A completely holy and completely human moment.

Too often, we dismiss our own experiences as being less than they actually are. All of us experience holiness in our lives and especially in our interactions with the people we’re closest too. Who’s to say that taking your grandmother out for lunch can’t be a holy experience? Love, of any kind, is the greatest mystery we have to experience and contemplate.

Nicole Seiferth, Diocese of New York

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.
Abbie Longero, New York, NY
The Fifth Station
Simon of Cyrene is forced to Take Up the Cross

Have you ever asked, “Why me?” All we really know about Simon (Mark 15:21), from the North African city of Cyrene, was that he was compelled to carry Jesus’ cross. Yes, it was too heavy for even Jesus to bear.

Why Simon? Some have speculated that he was known to be a follower of Jesus, others think the Romans randomly chose him because he was Jewish and in the crowd. As a visitor to Jerusalem, maybe he was simply minding his own business only to be snapped up into the story. Who knows?

Maybe we do not need an answer. We all have a purpose. Like Simon, we might find ourselves compelled to carry a cross that is not even our own. By doing so, we might be providing someone else with a little relief, or we could be contributing to the salvation of the world.

Dear Jesus, we know that there are crosses so heavy that mere mortals cannot bear them alone. Teach us to share our burdens and the burdens of others, for in doing so, we help to carry your cross, through which you redeemed the world. Amen.
REMEMBER:
WHEREVER YOU ARE,
WHATEVER YOU DO,
THAT NO MATTER HOW BURNT OUT
OR HOPELESS YOU MAY FEEL....
EVEN THE SAVIOR NEEDED SOMEONE
TO CARRY HIS CROSS

Roger Speer, Diocese of the Virgin Islands
The Sixth Station  
*Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus*

As Jesus grows weaker with every step, a woman feels compelled to do something. There was very little she could do for his fate had already been determined. All she could do was wipe his face with her veil. Legend says that his face was imprinted on the veil.

Veronica means “true icon” or “true image.” It takes a lot of courage to have compassion on someone in the middle of a crowd that had been yelling, “Crucify him!” and others who thought him to be an enemy of the state. Might it be that we are a true image of Jesus when we befriend those no one else will?

Terrance Taylor, Diocese of Southeast Florida

**O Jesus, you imprinted your image on the veil of one who looked on you with compassion, may we be a blessing to all who suffer, and through our gestures, may others see your image and your truth. Amen.**
Jen Grabarczyk, Diocese of Olympia
The Seventh Station
Jesus Falls a Second Time

How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart? Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death; my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,” and my foes will rejoice when I fall. But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me. —Psalm 13:2a, 3b-6

Sometimes when I make a mistake, it feels like the thousandth time I’ve made that mistake. It’s like when I trip over the same bump in the carpet even though I know it’s there. I get self conscious. I struggle to keep my chin up. What is compelling to me is that not only did Jesus fall, but he fell a second time, and both times he found the strength to stand up again. Did he trust in God’s unfailing love, and rejoice in the salvation that was to come? Did he remember the good things of his life, his beloved friends and family? Is that what kept him going, despite the pain and anguish? When I stumble and fall, my heart cries out, “How long, O Lord?” It’s a sad and lonely feeling, sitting there by myself on the floor. But I find the strength to stand up again. God has indeed been good to me; what’s a little bump in the carpet?

Kathleen Jaco, Diocese of Tennessee

Eternal God and Father, by whose power we are created and by whose love we are redeemed, guide and strengthen us by your Spirit, that we may find the strength to stand up again when we fall, devote ourselves to your service, and live this day in love to one another and to you. Amen.
The Eighth Station
Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning to them said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”


Is Jesus really saying to the women of Jerusalem that terrible times are coming? I just don’t buy that Jesus was predicting the apocalypse. What I hear him saying to the women of Jerusalem is a plea for perspective. Yes, this day is a hard and terrible one, he acknowledges. But there will be other hard days. Jesus was reminding the women to be mindful. Life can be short and hard. This is the same man who encouraged his disciples to take a second look at the lilies in a field, flowers that “neither toil nor spin,” but are a blessed part of God’s creation, anyway. Life, Jesus also says, is good.

Too often, we get caught up in the everyday stresses of our life, forgetting to thank God for all the many blessings of our lives. A prayer of thanksgiving is as much a reminder to ourselves to be mindful, as it is a song of praise to God for all that God has given us.

Nicole Seiferth, Diocese of New York

O God, thank you for the blessings of this life. Help me to be mindful of the glory of your creation and to find moments of gratitude in the dark times of life. Amen.
Michaelene Miller, Diocese of Arkansas
The Ninth Station
Jesus Falls a Third Time

*I am like water poured out; all my bones are racked. You have brought me down to the dust of death*

—Psalm 22: 14, 15b

There is no satisfactory explanation for why some people so often find themselves knocked to the ground, buried beneath the rubble of earthquakes or lost in their own smaller, personal tragedies. The Passion offers no explanation, it only shows us that we aren’t the only ones who have fallen. Christ’s hands and knees are bloodied too, pressed to the earth by the weight of the cross. Like a gentle parent instructing a small child, Christ reminds us that falling is a part of life. One day, the crucified Christ tells us, when we inevitably confront sorrow and fear, the hard ground will rush to meet us. There is no way to escape it, like death and pain, the ground is an inevitable thing that we encounter whether or not we’re looking for it. When we find ourselves on the ground, though, we’ll also find God here on the earth, broken and bleeding like us: Christ, all too human, weighed down by the cross, a saving presence among us down here in the dust of death.

Jeremiah Sierra, Diocese of New York

Lord God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of death to be for us the means of life: let us not forget that you suffer beside us, and grant us the grace to suffer for the sake of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.
As Jesus is led to his execution, not a shred of dignity is left to him. Even the clothes off his back are gambled for as the greed of his persecutors overcomes any sense of mercy, respect or humanity. What drives us to add insult to injury? Why, in the heat of conflict, disagreement and oppression, is it so easy to go the extra mile to hurt, injure, and defame? The humble clothes that are removed from Jesus’ body stand as a symbol, a trophy of human cruelty. Hatred feeds on hatred, and it only grows hungrier with each bite. The more time and energy we spend in nurturing conflict and hate, the easier it is to continue to do so. And what are we left with? Triumphs of an injured humanity: hearts broken, relationships shattered, damage done. We might even have the rags of a wounded soul to gloat over and to place on the mantelpiece. As Jesus is stripped of his garments we are confronted with a question: Whom are we injuring and what is it worth?

Lucas Grubbs, Diocese of Idaho

God of kindness, Lord of dignity, we pray that you stir in our hearts the impulse and the actions of a loving humanity for our good and your greater glory. Amen.
The Eleventh Station  
*Jesus is Nailed to the Cross*

> When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”

—Luke 23:33,34

It is something absolutely ridiculous and counterintuitive to any sense of religious meaning that God would suffer death. And not merely death, but death at the hands of those whom he made. Even more disorienting is that he would suffer and die in the form of a criminal and with criminals. But herein we see the strange and powerful wisdom and love of God. There is no place God will not go and no person whom God considers profane or unworthy. The depths of human agony and senselessness are not foreign to God, but rather, these are the depths to which God goes to show that he is always with us, loves us, and redeems us. In that light, it is entirely fitting that God dies with criminals. There is no one who is beyond the reach of God’s power to transform and no situation that God does not redeem.

Lucas Grubbs, Diocese of Idaho

O Lord Jesus Christ, who knows all of our weaknesses and who takes away all our sins, transform us every day and make us always aware of your mercy, faithfulness, and love. Amen.
Jesus on the Cross

weeping as they saw him all covered with the blood, and going to die. But Jesus spoke to them, and said:

"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For the days are coming when they shall count the men who have a curse upon them, when they shall wish that the mountains might fall on them, and the hills might cover them, and hide them from their enemies."

They had tried to make Jesus go to the cross, but he found that he was too weak to support the cross, and could not carry it. They seized a Roman who was coming out of the country into the city, a man of great strength, and they made him carry the cross to the place of Calvary.

It was a custom for the Jews to have flogged a person by the cross some minutes before they died on the cross so that they would not suffer so greatly. They cast lots for Jesus. When he had tasted it, and found what it was, he was completely grieved. He knew that he would die, but he wished to have his mind clear and to find out what was done and what he had suffered, and it was not to be granted.

At the place called Gethseman, they laid the cross down, and crucified Jesus, and then they drove nails through his hands and feet, and held him to the cross; and then they stood it up, and the three men who were with the soldiers were doing this dreadful work. Jesus said to them as he saw them, saying: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they are doing.

The soldiers also took the clothes that Jesus had worn, and gave to each one a garment. But when they came to his undergarment they found that it was woven and had no seams; so they said: "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to see who shall have it." So at the foot of the cross the soldiers threw lots for the garments of Christ. Two men who had been robbers and had been sentenced to die by the cross, were led out to die at the same time with Jesus. One was placed on a cross at his right side, and the other at his left, and to make Jesus appear as the worst, his cross stood in the middle. Over the head of Jesus on his cross, they placed, by Pilate's order, a sign on which was written:

"THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH,
THE KING OF THE JEWSE.
The Twelfth Station
Jesus Dies on the Cross

At three o’clock, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

—Mark 15:34

In the agonized last breaths of Jesus’ chilling words, we see His true humanity broken open. Death, the one place that all human beings will call their home, has opened it’s doors and taken in the Son of Man. In the heart of this darkness, can Jesus see that death is not the end? When death comes, our own, or that which surrounds us on all sides, can we see that it is not the end? A few small words in a meditation on death cannot disarm its strength, terror and magnitude. But perhaps, even for a moment, we can recall that God tastes death with us. God devours death. It is a profound and sacred mystery that offers a few droplets of cool water on a soul parched with the darkness and death of this world. Perhaps we will never fully understand death. And beyond simply saying that resurrection awaits us, we can also know that we are never alone. It is a path well trod by the saints of all ages and by God himself.

Lucas Grubbs, Diocese of Idaho

Lord of the living and the dead, at our last, remember us in your kingdom and illuminate the dark path of death which awaits us all. Do this for the sake of your life, death, and resurrection. Amen.
Leslie Lewis Sigler, Diocese of Los Angeles
The Thirteenth Station

The Body of Jesus is Placed in the Arms of His Mother

One of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water

—John 19:34

What might the soldier have felt after plunging his spear into Jesus’ side? Did he feel guilty, afraid, ashamed after being showered with God’s blood and water? Did he regret having to do it? Did he regret being part of God’s suffering?

There is a song by a Latin-American singer named Jésus Adrian Romero, Si hubiera estado allí (If I had been there), in which he wonders what each of us would have done if we had been there. Would we be the one who spit on him? Would we have rejoiced watching him suffer? We might have done the same thing as the soldier. The sad thing is, that even now that we know about him, we are still piercing his side with our actions.

Wendy Arleene Barrett Buchanan, Diocese of Honduras

Dear Lord, we are only human, but help us, give us the courage to dedicate ourselves to your work. Help us make the commitment to fight harder, believe stronger, and love deeper so your wounds won’t hurt as much. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.
At the end of things
Those you call family will remember:
Your laughter,
Your heartache,
Your triumph and failure,
And in their arms you may find rest.

Roger Speer, Diocese of the Virgin Islands
The Fourteenth Station
Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.

—John 20:2

The disciples and many others needed time and a way to prove it was true, to really believe it was happening. Christians are the same. Like Peter, they look for facts, people who have been changed, people who have experienced miracles in their lives. Like Thomas they need to touch his wounded hands. Only when we face Jesus personally in our lives do we accept the gift of the Resurrection, God’s great love for us.

Because of his resurrection we all can be confident that he is going to accomplish all he has promised. We can be confident that death is not the end; there is a better future life.

Wendy Arleene Barrett Buchanan, Diocese of Honduras

Dear Lord thank you for not giving up on us. You are still willing to sacrifice your life for us, we who are sinners, we who have failed you so many times. We ask you to give us the strength and the desire to become better Christians. Fill our hearts with gratitude and love. In Jesus’ name we pray.

Amen.
Holy and gracious Father:
In your infinite love you made us for yourself,
and, when we had fallen into sin
and become subject to evil and death,
you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ,
your only and eternal Son,
to share our human nature,
to live and die as one of us,
to reconcile us to you,
the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross,
and offered himself,
in obedience to your will,
a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

from Eucharistic Prayer A
The Book of Common Prayer, page 362
Palm Sunday
March 28, 2010

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”

—Luke 19:41-44

Christ crying over the ignorance of humanity is a sobering thought. Long before he suffered on the cross, Jesus suffered the pain of knowing that peace was in the grasp of his flock, but they were too blind to embrace it.

It’s not hard to imagine why we are too blind to see the blessings of this life. However, every day we let peace pass us by, allowing our “enemies” free passage to our hearts. May our eyes and our hearts be opened to the gift of peace that is freely given by our Lord and Savior.

Ewart Jones, Diocese of Texas
Monday of Holy Week
March 29, 2010

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

—Hebrews 12:1-3

The fact that our wildest dreams and greatest aspirations are bested by what God has planned for us is awe inspiring. The fact that there have been saints in various forms that have come before us and yet are with us is encouraging.

This knowledge gives us the freedom to be unhindered by our flaws and insecurities, the strength to persevere in the face of our struggles and the focus to see clearly the race marked out for us. The work we do in the name of the Lord is not in vain. In that, take comfort.

Ewart Jones, Diocese of Texas
The belief in God is the belief in humility. As hard as we may try, we are limited by the narrowness of what we can comprehend. Therefore assigning our meaning to God’s wisdom is an exercise in futility.

An awareness of our limits and the limitless nature of the Divine ultimately brings clarity as to how we are to walk this world. What would it be like to interact with creation unfettered from preconceived notions? How does our idea of wisdom hold us back from receiving the truth? What could be gained if we were tuned into the foolishness of God?

God will always choose the weak to dominate the strong, the outcast to outshine the well-established and the meek to triumph over the brash. A contrite heart and a humble spirit will learn this lesson quickly.

Ewart Jones, Diocese of Texas
Jesus makes me uncomfortable. That’s how I know he speaks to my heart. Stories are told for a variety of reasons, but the stories that Jesus told can be so pointed at times that they conjure intense emotions.

Anger, guilt, and fear can all be felt in the parable of the tenants found in the gospel of Mark. The vineyard owner only wants some of the fruit from the farmers, but his attempts to collect are met with defiance, so much so that his own son is killed by the farmers.

The chief priests who were on the receiving end of this tale were infuriated that they were clearly the “farmers” Jesus speaks of but they were also afraid of taking any action against Jesus at that moment, choosing instead to leave.

Any tale that causes you to be conflicted is probably a tale worth your attention. We have the option of being accountable to our life in Christ or giving in to our worldly insecurity.

Ewart Jones, Diocese of Texas
Maundy Thursday
April 1, 2010

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

—John 13: 34-35

Lent is a difficult time for many Christians who find the realities of Christ’s death a struggle to comprehend. This passage helps us to think of Lent as a time of renewal and redirection. It is through his death that we all will be saved; we will see the light of Easter after the dark tunnel of Lent. In this passage Jesus gives us the last commandment and all he asks us to do is love. This is a message that is so desperately needed in today’s society where so many claim to be Christians but consistently speak words of hate. Jesus doesn’t call us to take up arms to defend him nor does he ask us to judge others who don’t live up to our standards. He insists that those who claim to be his followers love one another.

P’tricia Egbert, Diocese of Kentucky

Almighty Lord, thank you for your enduring love. Help us to spread the words of your final commandment and help us to love one another as you loved us. Amen.
Good Friday
April 2, 2010

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

It is finished. We have been on a long journey these past 40 days and now, Jesus says, it is finished.

Death is hard. The silence of Good Friday is a reflection of the silence you often hear in homes where someone has just died. It’s a stunned silence, a waiting silence. What, it asks, comes next?

Silence is also hard. It’s hard to sit and be still, and listen for what’s in the silence. Maybe one reason I hear it asking “what comes next?” is that I’m so anxious for it to be over, for the penetrating, revealing lack of sound to end.

But there is comfort and wisdom in silence, too. We come together in spirit as a community on this day in silence to mourn and to think and, because we are human, to yearn for joy we know is around the corner, waiting for us.

For now, for this moment, just be with the silence. In the silence there is grief, but there is also love and joy and hope for what tomorrow brings.

It is finished.

Nicole Seiferth, Diocese of New York
Holy Saturday

April 3, 2010

The women saw how his body was laid;
and they prepared spices and ointments;
and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment


Holy Saturday is the day between Good Friday and Easter Day. It is also a day of rest, as the body of Jesus laid in his tomb. As stated in the Apostles’ Creed, “He descended to the dead. On the third day, He rose again.”

Holy Saturday is a day of mixed emotions for all Christians in the world. On one hand, we are mourning the death of Jesus on the cross; but on the other hand, we are ready to celebrate his resurrection from the dead.

Lemuel R. Moncur, Diocese of Southeast Florida

Dear Jesus, you took the form of a human and suffered death upon the cross to redeem and forgive our sins. Provide us with the understanding and the opportunity to rest and prepare for your coming. Amen.
Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels, 
and let your trumpets shout Salvation 
for the victory of our mighty King.

Rejoice and sing now, all the round earth, 
bright with a glorious splendor, 
for darkness has been vanquished by our eternal King.

Rejoice and be glad now, Mother Church, 
and let your holy courts, in radiant light, 
resound with the praises of your people.

from the The Exsultet
The Book of Common Prayer, page 286
Easter Day
April 4, 2010

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”

—John 20: 19

During the last two years I felt that my life had changed in a negative way, especially in my job. Every time I presented a report it was always insufficient or it wasn’t well done. I felt insecure and I didn’t understand the path my life was taking. My self-esteem was completely on the floor. Although I have often felt the presence of God in my life, it seemed that God had left me. But one day God spoke to me through one of the readings in church on Easter Day. When I heard the reading I understood better that God has a plan for our lives and even if we are sad or we feel distressed, he never leaves us. Jesus Christ died on the cross, but he was also raised from the dead. By his resurrection Jesus shows us how to live a life free from anxiety or sadness and embrace new life, renewed life. By this, Jesus shows us that God is in control. That is why Jesus Christ said to the disciples “Peace be with you.” This is the Peace that Easter Day brings, everyday.

Moisés Elías Quezada-Pringle, Diocese of Maryland

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection. Amen. (from the Easter Collect, BCP 222)
Durante los últimos dos años sentí que mi vida había dado un cambio negativo, especialmente en mi trabajo. Cada vez que entregaba algún reporte o daba alguna información, siempre le faltaba algo o no estaba bien realizado. Me sentía inseguro y no sabía como encaminarme por el nuevo rumbo que estaba tomando mi vida. Realmente mi autoestima estaba completamente por el suelo. A pesar de que he sentido la presencia de Dios en mi vida muchas veces, pensé que el Señor me había abandonado. Pero un día de forma sorpresiva el Señor me habló atreves de una de las lecturas Bíblicas del día de Pascua. Al escuchar esta lectura comprendí mucho mejor que Dios tiene un plan en nuestras vidas y que aunque nos encontremos tristes o estemos en angustia, el no nos abandona. Ciertamente Cristo murió en la Cruz, pero el resucitó entre muertos. Al resucitar, Jesús nos muestra como vivir sin ansiedad o tristeza y abrazar la vida nueva, la vida renovada. Al resucitar nos muestra que Dios tiene control de su plan y es por eso que Cristo le dijo a sus Discípulos “Paz a ustedes.” Esta sea la Paz de Pascua, cada día.

Moisés Elías Quezada-Pringle, Diocesis de Maryland

Oh Dios, que por nuestra redención diste a tu unigénito Hijo para sufrir muerte en la cruz, y por su gloriosa resurrección nos salvaste del poder de nuestro enemigo; Concédenos morir diariamente al pecado, para que podamos vivir siempre con El en la alegría de su resurrección. Amén. (de la Colecta para Pascua, LOC)
Young Adult and Campus Ministries
at the Episcopal Church Center

to receive Lenten meditations electronically, please send an email with your e-mail address as the subject line and "join meditations" in the body to mharewood@episcopalchurch.org