

The Gethsemane Watch

Prayers and Readings

Maundy Thursday into Good Friday 2021

Trinity Church in the City of Boston

As you meditate and pray in these hours between the Maundy Thursday liturgy and the Good Friday liturgy, feel free to make use of any of these materials. All those with page numbers after them come from *A Triduum Sourcebook – Volume I*, compiled by Joan Halmo and Frank Henderson, and published by Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago: 1996.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’ He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, ‘I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.’ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.’ Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, ‘So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ Again he went away for the second time and prayed, ‘My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.’ Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.’

~ Matthew 26: 36-46

Order these hours in mercy, saving God, for we stand at the center of our seasons when night and day run together and we call the cross our glory. Fill us only with hunger for the words of scripture, only with thirst for that stream whose waters drown us into the death of Jesus. There alone is our salvation, our life and resurrection.

~ Gabe Huck (p. 16)

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

~ John 13:1

The first day of the Triduum, from Holy Thursday sunset to Good Friday sunset, is the sixth day of creation, when God formed us from the clay and breath. In dying the Lord Jesus fell asleep, like Adam, that we might be formed from his own body, like Eve. Jesus completed a new creation. On this day we wash each other’s feet in tender humility. We fast as if we were again in paradise. And we come to the holy cross as if it were Eden’s tree of life.

~ Peter Mazar (p. 17)

Even though we are baptized, what we constantly lose and betray is precisely that which we received at baptism. Therefore Easter is our return every year to our own baptism, whereas Lent is our preparation for that return – the slow and sustained effort to perform, at the end, our own “passage” or “pascha” into the new life in Christ.... Each year Lent and Easter are, once again, the rediscovery and the recovery by us of what we were made through our own baptismal death and resurrection.

~ Alexander Schmemmann (p. 19)

Almighty and everlasting God, in the paschal mystery you established the new covenant of reconciliation. Grant that all who are born again in baptism may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith. Grant this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

~ The Book of Alternative Services (p. 19)

On this day Christ the Lamb of God gave himself into the hands of those who would slay him.

On this day Christ gathered with his disciples in the upper room.

On this day Christ took a towel and washed the disciples’ feet, giving us an example that we should do to others as he has done to us.

On this day Christ our God gave us this holy feast, that we who eat this bread and drink this cup may here proclaim his Holy Sacrifice and be partakers of his resurrection and at the last day may reign with him in heaven.

~ Book of Common Worship (p. 22)

1. Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle;
of the mighty conflict sing;
tell the triumph of the victim,
to his cross thy tribute bring.
Jesus Christ, the world's Redeemer
from that cross now reigns as King.

2. Thirty years among us dwelling,
his appointed time fulfilled,
born for this, he meets his passion,
this the Savior freely willed:
on the cross the Lamb is lifted,
where his precious blood is spilled.

3. He endures the nails, the spitting,
vinegar, and spear, and reed;
from that holy body broken
blood and water forth proceed:
earth, and stars, and sky, and ocean,
by that flood from stain are freed.

4. Faithful cross! above all other,
one and only noble tree!
None in foliage, none in blossom,
none in fruit thy peer may be:
sweetest wood and sweetest iron!
sweetest weight is hung on thee.

5. Bend thy boughs, O tree of glory!
Thy relaxing sinews bend;
for awhile the ancient rigor
that thy birth bestowed, suspend;
and the King of heavenly beauty
gently on thine arms extend.

6. Praise and honor to the Father,
praise and honor to the Son
praise and honor to the Spirit,
ever Three and ever One:
one in might and one in glory
while eternal ages run.

~ Hymn 165/166, *The Hymnal 1982*

O God, your Son Jesus Christ has left to us this meal of bread and wine in which we share his body and his blood. May we who celebrate this sign of his great love show in our lives the fruit of his redemption.

~ Book of Alternative Services (p. 25)

Infinite, intimate God; this night you kneel before your friends and wash our feet. Bound together in your love, trembling, we drink your cup and watch.

~ New Zealand Prayer Book (p. 25)

Holy God, source of all love, on the night of his betrayal Jesus gave his disciples a new commandment, to love one another as he loved them. Write this commandment in our hearts; give us the will to serve others as he was the servant of all, who gave his life and died for us.

~ Book of Common Worship (p. 25)

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

~ I Corinthians 11:23-26

When it came time for the second reading, a large blind man stood up, and tapping his long aluminum cane against the terrazzo floor, slowly, deliberately made his way to the ambo. He counted the paces – he must have practiced this – his lips muttering as if he were saying the beads, his cane tapping out the mantra. The ambo at St. Clement’s is high – it sits on two platforms and then up a few more steps. The blind lector ascended unaided, utterly concentrated on the sound of tapping. Finding his place, laying aside the cane, his fingers put words into his mouth: “I received from the Lord what I handed on to you....” He fingered the old, familiar words while his useless eyes stared blank and fierce over the assembly oblivious to the splendor of this lovely church, searching instead for the one who gives sight to the likes of him. By the end of the scripture, the lector was seeing something that the rest of us could not. His hands rested on the open book, his mouth fell silent and his upturned face seemed focused on something beyond the southwest corner of the room. He paused in peace. When he descended the ambo, tentatively putting a foot out into space, tapping, tapping, tapping to sound out solid ground, I knew that this begins the night when the blind will see, and this begins the night when those who see will be overshadowed.

~ David Philippart (p. 28)

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus answered, “You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.” Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” Jesus said to him, “One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.” For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, “Not all of you are clean.” After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

~ John 13:1-15

In those days, a woman in the city, a sinner, having learned that Jesus was eating in the house of Simon the leper, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind the Lord Jesus, at his feet, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment.

Let the woman alone. For she has performed a good service for me, that she might keep the ointment for the day of my burial. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me.

By pouring this ointment on my body the woman has prepared me for burial.

Mary therefore anointed Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair, and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and she wiped them with her hair, standing behind him, like the sinful woman, near the feet of the Lord, and kissing, wiped them with her tears.

~ Corpus Antiphonarium Officii (p. 32)

Jesus come, my feet are dirty. You have become a servant for my sake, so fill your basin with water; come, wash my feet. I know that I am bold in saying this, but your own words have made me fearful: "If I do not wash your feet, you will have no companionship with me." Wash my feet, then, so that I may be your companion!

But what am I saying: "Wash my feet?" Peter could say these words, for all that needed washing were his feet. For the rest, he was completely clean. I must be made clean with that other washing of which you said: "I have a baptism with which I must be baptized."

~ Origen, Third century (p. 34)

We have an example of humility. In God's name let each of us humble our heart at the sight of the high majesty who washes the feet of the fishermen. The most honored one among us is the most humble.

~ Italian *lauda*, Fourteenth century (p. 35)

O Lord Jesus Christ, thou didst not come to the world to be served, but also surely not to be admired or in that sense to be worshiped. Thou wast the way and the truth – and it was followers only thou didst demand. Arouse us therefore if we have dozed away into this delusion, save us from the error of wishing to admire thee instead of being willing to follow thee and resemble thee.

~ Soren Kierkegaard (p. 35)

Her majesty came into the hall, and, after some singing and prayers made, and the gospel of Christ's washing his disciples feet read, thirty-nine ladies and gentlewomen, for so many were the poor folks (according to the number of years complete of her majesty's age), addressed themselves with aprons and towels to wait upon her majesty; and she kneeling down upon the cushions and carpets under the feet of the poor women, first washed one foot of every one of them in so many several basins of warm water and sweet flowers, brought to her severally by the said ladies and gentlewomen, then wiped, crossed, and kissed them....

When her majesty had thus gone through the whole number of thirty-nine...she resorted to the first again, and gave to each one certain yards of broad-cloth Thirdly, she began at the first, and gave to each of them a pair of shoes. Fourthly, to each of them a wooden platter, wherein was half a side of salmon, as much ling, six red herrings and two loaves of bread. Fifthly, she began with the first again and gave to each of them a white wooden dish with claret wine. Sixthly, she received of each waiting lady and gentlewoman their towel and apron, and gave to each poor woman one of the same. Then the treasurer came to her majesty with thirty-nine small white purses, wherein were also thirty-nine pence after the number of the years of her majesty's age; and she received and distributed them severally.

Which done, she received of him so many several red leather purses, each containing twenty shillings, for the redemption of her majesty's gown, which by ancient order she ought to give to some one of them after her pleasure...and those she also delivered particularly to each one of the whole company.

As so taking her ease upon the cushion of state, and hearing the choir a little, her majesty withdrew herself, and the company departed; for it was by that time the sun-setting.

~ Royal Maundy of Queen Elizabeth I
Sixteenth century (p. 36-37)

Where charity and love prevail there God is ever found;
brought here together by Christ's love by love are we thus bound.

With grateful joy and holy fear his charity we learn;
let us with heart and mind and strength now love him in return.

Forgive we now each other's faults as we our faults confess;
and let us love each other well in Christian holiness.

Let strife among us be unknown, let all contention cease;
be his the glory that we seek, be ours his holy peace.

Let us recall that in our midst dwells God's begotten Son;
as members of his Body joined we are in him made one.

Love can exclude no race or creed if honored be God's Name;
our common life embraces all whose Father is the same.

~ Hymn 581, *The Hymnal 1982*

When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you! Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves.

~ I Corinthians 11: 20-22, 27-29

At thy mystical Supper, Son of God, today receive me as a communicant: For I will not speak of the mystery to thine enemies; I will not give thee a kiss like Judas; but as the thief I confess thee: Remember me, Lord, when thou comest into thy kingdom.

~ Byzantine liturgy (p.40)

Lord God, your love has called us here

as we, by love, for love were made.
Your loving likeness still we bear,
though marred, dishonored, disobeyed.
 We come with all our heart and mind
 your call to hear, your love to find.

We come with self-inflicted pains
of broken trust and chosen wrong,
half-free, half-bound by inner chains,
by social forces swept along,
 by powers and systems close confined
 yet seeking hope for humankind.

Lord God, in Christ you call our name
and then receive us as your own
not through some merit, right, or claim
but by your gracious love alone.
 We strain to glimpse your mercy seat
 and find you kneeling at our feet.

Then take the towel, and break the bread,
and humble us, and call us friends.
Suffer and serve till all are fed
and show how grandly love intends
 to work till all creation sings
 to fill all worlds, to crown all things.

Lord God, in Christ you set us free
your life to live, your joy to share.
Give us your Spirit's liberty
to turn from guilt and dull despair
 and offer all that faith can do
 while love is making all things new.

~ Brian Wren (pp. 42-43)

The nourishing quality of the Eucharist, freely offered to anyone who's famished, has always been a central metaphor for me. I don't partake because I'm a good [Christian], holy and pious and sleek. I partake because I'm a bad [Christian], riddled by doubt and anxiety and anger: fainting from severe hypoglycemia of the soul. I need food.

~ Nancy Mairs (p. 44)

There is no greater challenge than that of the Last Supper, in which Christ lovingly offered his very person in sacrifice for those assembled, for all those who would assemble in the future, and even for all who would be called but would decline the invitation to dine in the Kingdom of God. Meal solidarity with Jesus the Christ requires that the participants join Christ in his sacrifice, doing what he did in memory of him, offering their own lives that all might live, and making his sacrifice an active force in the world.

The challenge of the Last Supper was also about betrayal and denial, and so is its fulfillment in the Lord's Supper. Betrayal at the Last Supper meant handing Jesus over to those who plotted his death. Betrayal for Christians assembled at the Lord's supper means lording it over one's brother and sister Christians and demanding to be recognized as "benefactors." Among those who join at the table of Jesus the Christ, the greatest has to be as the youngest, the leader as the servant.

~ Eugene LaVerdiere (p. 46)

May Jesus Christ, who for our sake became obedient unto death, even death on a cross, keep you and strengthen you this night and for ever.

~ United Methodist Book of Worship (p.49)

Sunset to sunrise changes now, for God doth make his world anew;
On the Redeemer's thorn-crowned brow the wonders of that dawn we view.

E'en though the sun withholds its light, lo! a more heavenly lamp shines here,
and from the cross on Calvary's height gleams of eternity appear.

Here in o'erwhelming final strife the Lord of life hath victory,
and sin is slain, and death brings life, and earth inherits heaven's key.

~ Hymn 163, *The Hymnal 1982*

O crucified Jesus, Son of the Father, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
eternal Word of God, we worship you.

O crucified Jesus, holy temple of God, dwelling place of the Most High, gate of heaven, burning
flame of love, we worship you.

O crucified Jesus, sanctuary of justice and love, full of kindness, source of all faithfulness, we
worship you.

O crucified Jesus, ruler of every heart, in you are the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, in you
dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, we worship you.

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us peace,

~ Book of Common Worship (pp. 52-53)

Lord Jesus Christ, as we kneel at the foot of the cross, help us to see and know your love for us,
so that we may place at your feet all that we have and are.

Crucified savior, naked God, you hang disgraced and powerless. Grieving, we dare to hope, as
we wait at the cross with your mother and your friend.

~ New Zealand Prayer Book (p. 59)

See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Just as there were many who were astonished at him—so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals— so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

~ Isaiah 53:13-53:12

I said: In the noontide of my days I must depart; I am consigned to the gates of Sheol for the rest of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord in the land of the living; I shall look upon mortals no more among the inhabitants of the world. My dwelling is plucked up and removed from me like a shepherd's tent; like a weaver I have rolled up my life; he cuts me off from the loom; from day to night you bring me to an end; I cry for help until morning; like a lion he breaks all my bones; from day to night you bring me to an end. Like a swallow or a crane I clamor, I moan like a dove. My eyes are weary with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed; be my security! For Sheol cannot thank you, death cannot praise you; those who go down to the Pit cannot hope for your faithfulness. The living, the living, they thank you, as I do this day; fathers make known to children your faithfulness.

~ Isaiah 38:10-14, 18-19

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

~ Philippians 2:5-11

Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

~ Hebrew 4:14-16; 5:7-9

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are.

~ I Corinthians 1: 18, 20, 22-25

Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.

~ John 18:1

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"

~ Genesis 3:8-9

Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me."

~ John 18:2-9

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?" So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him.

First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

~ John 18:10-14

Weary of all trumpeting, weary of all killing,
weary of all songs that sing promise non-fulfilling,
we would raise, O Christ, one song; we would join in singing
that great music, pure and strong, wherewith heaven is ringing.

Captain Christ, O lowly Lord, Servant King your dying
bade us sheathe the foolish sword, bade us cease denying.
Trumpet with your Spirit's breath through each height and hollow;
into your self-giving death, call us all to follow.

To the triumph of your cross summon all the living;
summon us to love by loss, gaining all by giving,
suffering all, that we may see triumph in surrender;
leaving all, that we may be partners in your splendor.

~Hymn 572, *The Hymnal 1982*

Sing, oh! my love, oh! my love, my love, my love,
This have I done for my true love

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day:
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance.

For thirty pence Judas me sold,
His covetousness for to advance:
Mark whom I kiss, the same do hold!
The same is he shall lead the dance.

Then on the cross hanged I was,
Where a spear my heart did glance;
There issued forth both water and blood,
To call my true love to my dance.

Then down to hell I took my way
For my true love's deliverance,
And rose again on the third day,
Up to my true love and the dance.

Then up to heaven I did ascend,
Where now I dwell in sure substance
On the right hand of God, that man
May come unto the general dance.

~ English carol
Seventeenth century (p. 80)

Lord God of all creation, whose awesome will lifts up the cross,
a sign of entry to eternal life, change our hearts that we may turn
from all past ways of worldly power, from means of destruction and coercion,
to embrace the way of the cross, the weakness that is true power,
the folly that marks your wisdom and your reign.

~ Robert Hovda (p. 82)

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves.

Peter also was standing with them and warming himself. Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

~ John 18:15-27

A dread and marvelous mystery we see come to pass this day. He who none may touch is seized; he who looses Adam from the curse is bound. He who tries our hearts and inner thoughts is unjustly brought to trial. He who closed the abyss is shut in prison. He before whom the powers of heaven stand with trembling, stands before Pilate; the Creator is struck by the hand of the creature. He who comes to judge the living and the dead is condemned to the cross; the Destroyer of hell is enclosed in a tomb.

~ Byzantine liturgy (p. 83)

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this man?' They answered, 'If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.' The Jews replied, 'We are not permitted to put anyone to death.' (This was to fulfil what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.' Pilate asked him, 'What is truth?'

~ John 18:28-38

O depth of compassion! How can it be that Christ, the Fire unapproachable, stands before Pilate and yet does not consume him in the flames, though Pilate is but grass and reeds and earth.

~ Byzantine liturgy (p. 85)

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

‘He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.’

When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

~ I Peter 2:21-24

It is immensely easier to suffer in obedience to a human command than to suffer in the freedom of one’s own responsible deeds. It is immensely easier to suffer with others than to suffer alone. It is immensely easier to suffer openly and honorably than apart and in shame. It is immensely easier to suffer through commitment of the physical life than in the spirit. Christ suffered in freedom, alone, apart and in shame, in body and spirit, and since then many Christians have suffered with him.

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer (p.86)

I don’t know who – or what – put the question, I don’t know when it was put. I don’t even remember answering. But at some moment I did answer *Yes* to Someone – or Something – and from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, my life, in self-surrender, had a goal.

From that moment I have known what it means “not to look back,” and “to take no thought for the morrow.”

Led by the Ariadne’s thread of my answer through the labyrinth of life, I came to a time and place where I realized that the Way leads to a triumph which is a catastrophe, and to a catastrophe which is a triumph, that the price for committing one’s life would be reproach, and that the only elevation possible to man lies in the depths of humiliation. After that, the word “courage” lost its meaning, since nothing could be taken from me.

As I continued along the Way, I learned, step by step, word by word, that behind every saying in the gospels, stands one man and one man’s experience. Also that behind the prayer that the cup might pass from him and his promise to drink it. Also behind each of the words from the cross.

~ Dag Hammarskjold (pp. 87-88)

Lord Jesus Christ, for the sake of thy holy cross, be with me to shield me.

Lord Jesus Christ, by the memory of thy blessed cross, be within me to strengthen me.

Lord Jesus Christ, for the holy cross, be ever round about me to protect me.

Lord Jesus Christ, for thy glorious cross, go before me to direct my steps.

Lord Jesus Christ, for thy adorable cross, come thou after me to guard me.

Lord Jesus Christ, for thy cross, worthy of all praise, overshadow me to bless me.

Lord Jesus Christ, for thy noble cross, be thou in me to lead me to thy kingdom.

~ Saxon prayer

Eleventh century (p. 90)

Pilate said, 'I find no case against Jesus. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' They shouted in reply, 'Not this man, but Barabbas!' Now Barabbas was a bandit.

~ John 18:38-40

At Eastertime the Roman emperors, starting with Valentinian in 367, released from prison persons who were not dangerous criminals; this practice was followed by emperors, kings and popes all through medieval times and up to the present century....

Leading citizens in the Roman Empire imitated the clemency of the emperors at Eastertime, granting freedom to slaves, forgiving enemies by ending feuds and quarrels, and discontinuing prosecutions in the courts as well. These customs, too, prevailed all through medieval times in the Christian countries of Europe.

~ Francis X. Weiser (p. 91)

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."

~ John 19:1-7

God who has adorned the whole earth with flowers is crowned with thorns.

~ Byzantine liturgy (p. 93)

Because for our sake you tasted gall, may the enemy's bitterness be killed in us.

Because for our sake you drank sour wine, may what is weak in us be strengthened.

Because for our sake you were spat upon, may we be bathed in the dew of immortality.

Because for our sake you were struck with a rod, may we receive shelter at the last.

Because for our sake you accepted a crown of thorns, may we who love you be crowned with garlands that never can fade.

Because for our sake you were wrapped in a shroud, may we be clothed in your all-enfolding strength.

Because you were laid in the new grave and the tomb, may we receive renewal of soul and body.

Because you rose and returned to life, may we be brought to life again.

~ Communion hymn

Fifth century (p. 93)

Do not go into the garden,
Oh! Jesus do not go into the garden before the dawn!
If I do not go into the garden in the dead of night,
who will lead you to the sunrise of Paradise?
I will go into the garden in the dead of night.

Do not let them bind your hands,
Oh! Jesus do not let them bind your hands without a word!
If I do not let them bind my hands like a thief,
who will break open the prisons in which you languish?
I will let them bind my hands like a thief.

Do not hang on the cross,
Oh! Jesus do not hang on the cross till you die!
If I do not hang on the cross like a bird,
who will protect you from the flames of hell?
I will hang on the cross like a bird.

Do not let your heart be pierced,
Oh! Jesus do not let your heart be pierced by your executioners!
If I do not let my heart be pierced like a ripe fruit,
from whom will you drink the blood and water that will heal you?
I will let me heart be pierced like a ripe fruit.

Do not go into the tomb
Oh! Jesus do not go into the tomb that they have dug!
If I do not go into the tomb like a grain of wheat,
who will lift from your coffins your lifeless bodies?

~ Commission Francophone Cistercienne
(pp. 94-95)

I love thee, Lord, but not because I hope for heaven thereby,
Not yet for fear that loving not I might for ever die.

But for that thou didst all the world upon the cross embrace;
For us didst bear the nails and spear, and manifold disgrace.

And griefs and torments numberless, and sweat of agony;
E'en death itself; and all for one who was thine enemy.

Then why, most loving Jesus Christ, should I not love thee well,
Not for the sake of winning heaven, nor any fear of hell.

Not with the hope of gaining aught, nor seeking a reward;
But as thyself hast loved me, O ever loving Lord!

E'en so I love thee, and will love, and in thy praise will sing,
Solely because thou art my God and my eternal King.

~ Hymn 682, *The Hymnal 1982*

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

~ John 19:8-16

I said I will not sin! I will curb my tongue and muzzle my mouth when the wicked confront me.

I kept silent, would not say a word, yet me anguish grew. It scorched my heart and seared my thoughts until I had to speak.

~ Psalm 39:2-4 (p. 99)

Carrying the cross by himself, Jesus went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews", but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews."' Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have

written.' When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfil what the scripture says,

'They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.'

And that is what the soldiers did.

~ John 19:17-25

Thou didst suspend the earth immovably upon the waters. Now creation beholds thee suspended on Calvary. It quakes with great amazement and cries: "None is holy but thee, O Lord."

~ Byzantine liturgy

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? *
and are so far from my cry
and from the words of my distress?
- 2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; *
by night as well, but I find no rest.
- 3 Yet you are the Holy One, *
enthroned upon the praises of Israel.
- 4 Our forefathers put their trust in you; *
they trusted, and you delivered them.
- 5 They cried out to you and were delivered; *
they trusted in you and were not put to shame.
- 6 But as for me, I am a worm and no man, *
scorned by all and despised by the people.
- 7 All who see me laugh me to scorn; *
they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,

- 8 "He trusted in the LORD; let him deliver him; *
let him rescue him, if he delights in him."
- 9 Yet you are he who took me out of the womb, *
and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.
- 10 I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born; *
you were my God when I was still in my
mother's womb.
- 11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, *
and there is none to help.
- 12 Many young bulls encircle me; *
strong bulls of Bashan surround me.
- 13 They open wide their jaws at me, *
like a ravener and a roaring lion.
- 14 I am poured out like water;
all my bones are out of joint; *
my heart within my breast is melting wax.
- 15 My mouth is dried out like a pot-sherd;
my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; *
and you have laid me in the dust of the grave.
- 16 Packs of dogs close me in,
and gangs of evildoers circle around me; *
they pierce my hands and my feet;
I can count all my bones.
- 17 They stare and gloat over me; *
they divide my garments among them;
they cast lots for my clothing.
- 18 Be not far away, O LORD; *
you are my strength; hasten to help me.
- 19 Save me from the sword, *
my life from the power of the dog.

- 20 Save me from the lion's mouth, *
my wretched body from the horns of wild bulls.
- 21 I will declare your Name to my brethren; *
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.
- 22 Praise the LORD, you that fear him; *
stand in awe of him, O offspring of Israel;
all you of Jacob's line, give glory.
- 23 For he does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty;
neither does he hide his face from them; *
but when they cry to him he hears them.
- 24 My praise is of him in the great assembly; *
I will perform my vows in the presence of those who
worship him.
- 25 The poor shall eat and be satisfied,
and those who seek the LORD shall praise him: *
"May your heart live for ever!"
- 26 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to
the LORD, *
and all the families of the nations bow before him.
- 27 For kingship belongs to the LORD; *
he rules over the nations.
- 28 To him alone all who sleep in the earth bow down
in worship; *
all who go down to the dust fall before him.
- 29 My soul shall live for him;
my descendants shall serve him; *
they shall be known as the LORD'S for ever.
- 30 They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn *
the saving deeds that he has done.

~ Psalm 22 (BCP, pp. 610-612)

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

~ John 19:25-30

Lord Jesus, entrusting your mother to your beloved disciple, giving up your spirit into the hands of your Father, dying for all of us sinners:
Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy on us.

By your sufferings, Lord, heal the wounds in our hearts. Let your tears be the source of joy for us, and let your death give us life.

~ Lucien Deiss (p. 106)

Today the Master of the creation and the Lord of Glory is nailed to the cross and his side is pierced; and he who is the sweetness of the church tastes gall and vinegar.

~ Byzantine liturgy (p. 110)

O Mary, don't you weep, don't you mourn,
O Mary, don't you weep, don't you mourn:
Pharaoh's army got drowned!
Oh, Mary, don't you weep!

~ African American spiritual (p. 110)

Who is the fine man upon the Passion Tree? Is it your Son, dear Mother, know you not me?
Is that the wee babe I bore nine months in my womb that was born in a stable when no house would give us room?

Mother, be quiet, let not your heart be torn, my keening women, Mother, are yet to be born!

M'ochon agus m'ochon o!

~ An Irish *caoine*, a lament (p. 111)

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be

broken.” And again another passage of scripture says, “They will look on the one whom they have pierced.”

~ John 19:31-37

And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior’s blood?
Died he for me, who caused his pain? For me, who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

‘Tis mystery all! the immortal dies: who can explore his strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries to sound the depths of love divine.
‘Tis mercy all! let earth adore, let angel minds inquire no more.

He left his Father’s throne above – so free, so infinite his grace –
Emptied himself of all but love, and bled for Adam’s helpless race.
‘Tis mercy all, immense and free; for, O my God, it found out me!

~ Charles Wesley
Eighteenth century (p. 115)

Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

~ John 19:38-42

Joseph went to Pilate, pleaded with him and cried out:
Give me that Stranger who since his youth has wandered as a stranger.
Give me that Stranger upon whom I look with wonder, seeing him a guest of death.
Give me that Stranger whom envious men estrange from the world.
Give me that Stranger that I may bury him in a tomb, who being a stranger has no place whereon to lay his head.
Give me that Stranger to whom his mother cried out as she saw him dead:
“My Son, my senses are wounded and my heart is burned as I see you dead!
Yet trusting in your resurrection, I magnify you!”
In such words did the honorable Joseph plead with Pilate.
He took the Savior’s body and, with fear, wrapped it in linen with spices.
And he placed you in a tomb, O you who grant everlasting life and great mercy to us all.

~ Byzantine liturgy (pp. 117-118)

The Lord has conquered the world, not by steel but by wood.

~ Augustine

Fifth century (p. 126)

Let all the trees of the forest sing a glad hymn, for on this day they behold one of themselves,
The tree of the cross, being honored with kisses and embraces.

~ Theodore of Studios

Ninth century (p. 133)

How splendid the cross of Christ! It brings life, not death; light, not darkness; Paradise, not its loss. It is the wood on which the Lord, like a great warrior, was wounded in the hands and feet and side, but healed thereby our wounds. A tree has destroyed us, a tree now brings us life.

~ Theodore of Studios

Ninth century (p.133)

Agios o Theos!

Agios Ischyros!

Agios Athantos, eleison imas!

Sanctus Deus!

Sanctus Fortis!

Sanctus Immortalis, miserere nobis!

Holy is God!

Holy and strong!

Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us!

~ Roman liturgy (p. 137)

Having to pass over the stormy sea of the world, let us confidently mount upon the wood of the cross and spread the sails of our faith to the favorable winds of the Holy Spirit.

~ Medieval Spanish missal (p. 139)

He who was also the carpenter's glorious son set up his cross above death's all-consuming maw, and led the human race into the dwelling place of life. Since a tree had brought about the downfall of our race, it was upon a tree that we crossed over to the realm of life. Bitter was the branch that had once been grafted upon that ancient tree, but sweet the young shoot that has now been grafted in, the shoot in which we are meant to recognize the Lord whom no creature can resist.

We give glory to you, Lord, who raised up your cross to span the jaws of death like a bridge by which souls might pass from the region of the dead to the land of the living.

~ Ephraem of Syria
Fourth century (p. 140)

The Devil speaks: Now then, Hades, mourn and I join in unison with you in wailing.
Let us lament as we see the tree which we planted changed into a holy trunk.
Robbers, murderers, tax gatherers, harlots, rest beneath it, and make nests in its branches
in order that they might gather the fruit of sweetness from the supposedly sterile wood.
For they cling to the cross as the tree of life.

~ Romanos
Sixth century (p. 145)

O come, ye faithful, and let us drink, not from a well of earthly water that perishes but from the fountain of light, as we venerate the cross of Christ: for his cross is our glory.

~ Byzantine liturgy (p.147)

Rejoice, O Cross, thrice-blessed and divine wood, a light to those in darkness. Shining on the four corners of the earth, thou dost prepare us for the dawn of Christ's resurrection. O grant to all the faithful that they may come to the festival of Easter.

~ Byzantine liturgy (p. 148)

Lord, as to thy dear cross we flee, And plead to be forgiven, so let thy life our pattern be, and form our souls for heav'n.

~ J. Hampden Gurney
Nineteenth century (p.150)

O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee.
I give thee back the life I owe, that in thine ocean depths its flow
may richer, fuller ever be.

O Light that follows all my way, I yield my flick'ring torch to thee.
My heart restores its borrowed ray, that in thy sunshine's blaze its day
may brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee.
I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not in vain,
That morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee.
I lay in dust, life's glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

~ George Matheson
Nineteenth century (p. 154)

This is the day of the veneration of the precious cross. Now it is placed before us and shines with the brightness of Christ's resurrection. Let us all draw near and kiss it with great rejoicing in our souls.

O mighty cross of the Lord, manifest thyself: Show me the divine vision of thy beauty and grant me worthily to venerate thee. For I speak to thee and embrace thee as though thou wast alive.

~ Byzantine liturgy (p. 158)

Jesus said, "And I, when I am lifted from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

~ John 12:32

We call thee our Savior and Redeemer, since thou didst come to earth to redeem us from the servitude under which we were bound or had bound ourselves, to save the lost. This is thy work, which thou didst complete, and which thou wilt continue to complete unto the end of the world; for since thou thyself has said it, therefore, thou wilt do it – lifted up from the earth thou wilt draw all unto thee.

~ Soren Kierkegaard (p. 160)

What is this sight we behold? What is this present rest? The King of the ages keeps the Sabbath in the tomb; through his Passion he has fulfilled the plan of salvation, granting us a new Sabbath rest. To him let us cry aloud:

Arise, O God, and judge the earth, for thou dost reign forever, and beyond measure is thy great mercy.

Come, let us see our Life lying in the tomb, to give life to those who lie dead in the tombs.

Come, look today on the Son of Judah sleeping; with Jacob the patriarch let us cry to him:

"Thou hast stooped down; thou hast couched as a lion; who dares rouse thee up, O King?"

But arise in thine own power, O thou who didst willingly give thyself for us.

O Lord, glory to thee!

The great Moses mystically foreshadowed this day, when he said: God blessed the seventh day.

This is the blessed Sabbath; this is the day of rest.

~ Gregory of Nyssa
Fourth century (p. 167)

O Christ, thou didst sleep a life-giving sleep in the grave, and didst awaken humankind from the heavy sleep of sin.

~ Byzantine liturgy (p. 175)

In thy name, O Jesu who wast crucified; I lie down to rest;
Watch thou me in sleep remote. Hold thou me in thy one hand.
Watch thou me in sleep remote. Hold thou me in thy one hand.

~ Irish blessing (p. 176)

Inexpressible wonder! In the furnace thou didst save the holy youths from the flame.
Now thou art placed in the grave as a lifeless corpse, for the salvation of us who sing:
“Blessed art thou, O God, our Redeemer!”

Happy is the tomb! For having received the Creator as one asleep,
it became a divine treasury of life, the salvation of us who sing:
“Blessed art thou, O God, our Redeemer!”

~ Byzantine liturgy (p. 178)

O Lord my God, I sing to thee a burial song and a funeral chant,
who by thy burial hath opened for me a door to life,
and by thy death hath brought an end to death and hell.

~ Byzantine liturgy (p.179)

Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains just a
single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

~ John 12:24

Christ our Lord, like the seed buried in the ground, you brought forth for us the harvest of grace.

~ Morning Prayer

Liturgy of the Hours (p.184)

Christ was in the tomb; the whole world was sown with the seed of Christ’s life; that which
happened thirty years ago in the womb of the Virgin Mother was happening now, but now it was
happening yet more secretly, yet more mysteriously, in the womb of the whole world. Christ
had already told those who flocked to hear Him preach that the seed must fall into the earth, or
else remain by itself alone. Now the seed of His life was hidden in darkness in order that His life
should quicken in countless hearts, over and over again for all time. His burial, which seemed to
be the end, was the beginning. It was the beginning of Christ-life in multitudes of souls. It was
the beginning, too, of the renewal of Christ’s life in countless souls.

~ Caryll Houselander (p.185)

O God, great womb of wondrous love, your Spirit moving on the deep
did wake a world within yourself, a pulsing, lighted world, from sleep.
O hearth, O heartbeat of the whole, your dark light dance began the times,
the days and seasons, seconds, years, the ages’ rhythms and the rhymes.
O fire, O firmament and sea, your seething ferment’s energy
called forth a whirling waltz of life, each plant and creature and its seed.

O silent soul, O mind and strength, your center did conceive and bear,
Its male and female image self – two human forms, one breath to share.
Now come with rest, O Sabbath sun, O sanctuary, sacred home,
We groan till all is groan complete, fulfilled, at peace, O great Shalom.

~ Harris J. Loewen (p. 186)

God will open your eyes, that you may behold the wondrous things that he will do: Remember with thankfulness the several resurrections that he hath given you; from superstition and ignorance, in which, you, in your Fathers lay dead; from sin, and a love of sin, in which, you, in the dayes of your youth, lay dead; from sadness, and dejection of spirit, in which, you, in your worldly crosses, or spiritual temptations, lay dead; And assure your self, that that God that loves to perfect his own works, when you shall lye dead in your graves, will give you that Resurrection to life, which he hath promised to all them that do good.

~ John Donne

Seventeenth century (p. 190)