



A Journey through Holy Week - 2020

Holy Week is the heart of our faith. This year we can't gather together on these days, so I offer these simple reflections and actions. As we share them may we know that, though physically separated from our Christian sisters and brothers, we are not spiritually separated. Most importantly, we are not separated from God who loves us and all people.

As you approach these reflections, I suggest you

- Light a candle.
- Take a minute or two just to be still.

A way of engaging with Scripture is to

- Read it slowly, at least twice.
Notice what word or phrase leaps out at you.
- Reflect on how your life is touched by this.
How does this touch our lives in these times of COVID 19?
- Pray in response to what God is saying to you.
What might God want you to know?
What might God be asking of you?
- Rest in God and respond to God's invitation

Extracts from *A New Zealand Prayer Book, He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa* are used with permission.

Palm Sunday - 5th April

'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

Jesus rides into Jerusalem surrounded by a crowd waving palms, welcoming him as a king.



Reading: Matthew 21:1-11

Question: How would we welcome Jesus today?
How do we welcome him into the present situation
- into this 'lock-down' - into the 'bubble' in which
we are living for this time?

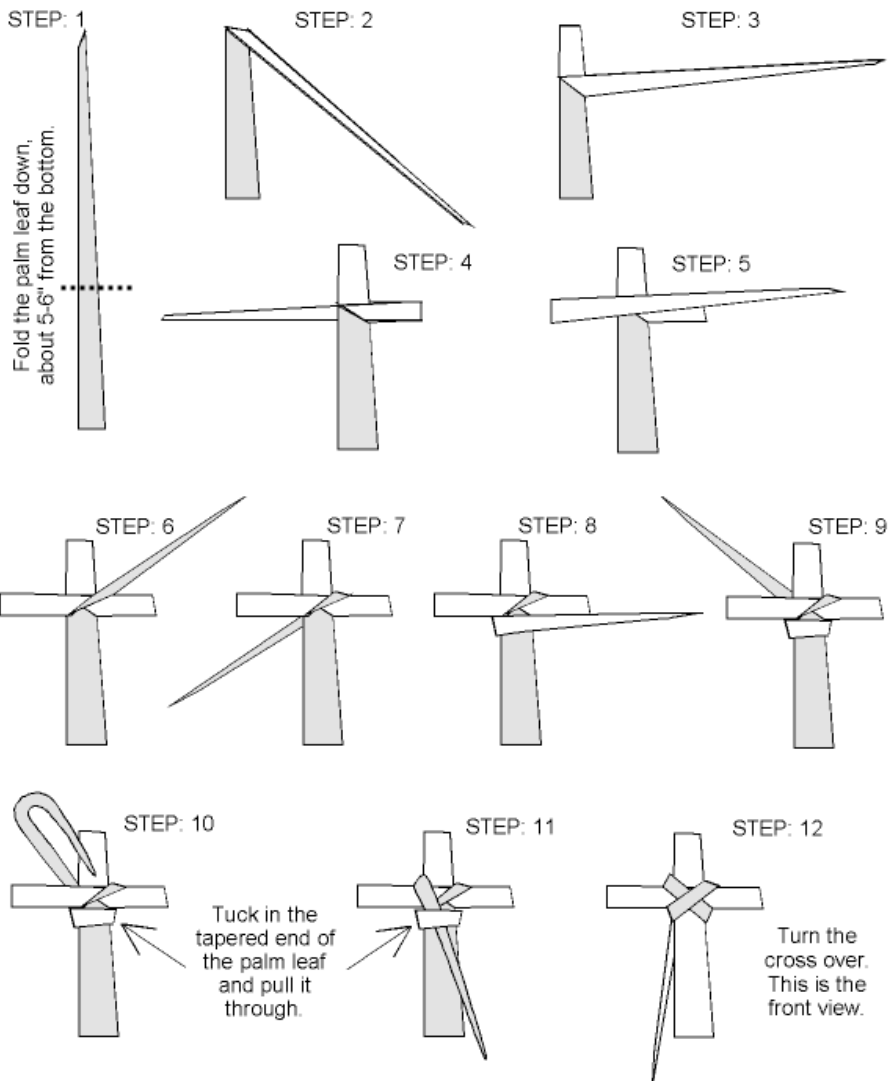
Prayer: Jesus, when you rode into Jerusalem
the people waved palms
with shouts of acclamation.
Grant that when the shouting dies
we may still walk beside you even to a cross.

Lord Jesus,
acclaimed as king,
crucified as a criminal,
teach us to accept our sufferings and triumphs
for your glory alone.

Action:
We would normally receive a palm cross today. How about making your own? (There's a guide on the next page. We usually use flax, but palm leaves will work). Or perhaps place some small branches (which is what Matthew describes the people using) on the floor in your hallway.

Palm Leaf Cross Directions

Supplies: One palm leaf strip about 24-26" in length, 1/2" in width, tapering to the end.



Monday in Holy Week - 6th April

Jesus gathers with his friends in Bethany at the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, anoints Jesus' feet with costly perfume, wiping his feet with her hair. This extravagant devotion is criticised by Judas, but Jesus defends the action. He sees it as anticipating his death.



Reading: John 12:1-11

Question: How might we express our love and gratitude to Jesus?

Prayer: Teach us, Loving Lord,
to reflect the extravagance of your love in our lives.

Jesus,
receive our love and worship.
Show us how to give you what we have,
for nothing is too big or small
for us to offer, or for you to use.

Action:
Light a scented candle or put some essential oil in an oil burner.

Tuesday in Holy Week - 7th April

Jesus speaks about the meaning of his death

Reading: John 12:20-36

Question: What needs to die in us in order for us to bear fruit?
During the time of this lockdown what may have died and what may have come alive?
Where are we finding new life?

Prayer: Jesus,
when we experience loss
help us to discover something new.

Faithful God,
increase our faith and hope and love.
Lead us in the path of Christ
who is your Word of life.

Action:
Plant some seeds.

Unless a grain of wheat



falls into the earth
and dies, it remains
just a single grain;
but if it dies,
it bears much fruit.

John 12:24

Wednesday in Holy Week - 8th April

At his final supper with his disciples Jesus is troubled by the knowledge of Judas' impending betrayal but tells his disciples that God is at work through these events.



Reading: John 13:21-32

Question: How do we see Judas?
Do we recognise something of Judas in ourselves?

Prayer: God of forgiveness and love,
help me to examine my own heart
to see the ways I betray, desert, and deny Jesus.

Thanks be to you, my Lord Jesus Christ
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
O most merciful Redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly.

Action: Write a letter to Jesus, expressing what he means to you. It may include thanksgivings and affirmations as well as questions and doubts.

Maundy Thursday - 9th April

Jesus washes his disciples feet during his last meal with them. He has set for them and us an example for we are to be servants of love for one another.



Reading: John 13:1-7, 31b-35

Question: What does it mean for us to serve others?
How does it feel to be served?
Take time to recall how you have been served in the past, and how you have been able to serve others.

Prayer: Everlasting God,
your Son Jesus Christ girded himself with a towel
and washed his disciples' feet;
grant us the will to be the servant of others
as he was servant of all.

Action: Wash the feet of the others in your household and allow them to wash yours. If you are by yourself, wash your own feet, allowing your hands to be the hands of Jesus.

Good Friday - 10th April

The story of Jesus' trials before the Jewish council and Pilate, followed by his sufferings and death.

Reading: John 18:1 - 19:42



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

Question: How do you respond to what you see on the cross?
What does the suffering and death of Jesus mean for you?

In his hymn, 'When I survey the wondrous cross'
Isaac Watts wrote:

Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my soul, my life, my all.
What might that mean for you at this time?

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, crucified for us.
we kneel at the foot of your cross
to watch with you.
Help us to see the cost of your forgiveness
so that we may be made new through your love.

Action: Place a cross at the entrance of your home or on your front lawn. It does not need to be fancy - just a couple of pieces of wood put together - or perhaps made of other material.

Holy Saturday - 11th April

Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea prepare Jesus' body for burial according to Jewish custom, interring Jesus' body in a tomb which has not been used before.



This is a day of waiting - waiting in the dark - waiting with our grief and anxieties - waiting to see what will happen next. We do nothing. We remember the emptiness felt by the first disciples after the death of Jesus. They were not expecting the resurrection.

Reading: John 19:38-42

Question: How comfortable are you with waiting and not knowing what will happen next?

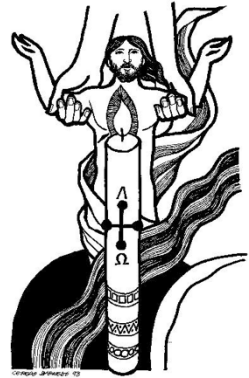
Prayer: We remember, O God,
the grief of the disciples when Jesus died.
Lead us beyond our fear of death
to the knowledge and hope of eternal life
in him who lives for ever.

Action: Let us be with our griefs and losses - with the uncertainties of life.

Easter Eve - 11th April

Easter Day begins at sunset and it is traditional to renew our baptismal promises at this time or on the morning of Easter Day.

The passage from Romans reminds us that we have been joined with Jesus in his death through baptism, so that we are to know a resurrection life.



Readings: Romans 6:3-11
Matthew 28:1-10

Question: What does your baptism mean to you?
How do you live out your baptismal promises?

Prayer: Lord God,
you made this night bright
with the radiance of the risen Christ;
may we who have been raised with him in baptism
reflect the light of his glory,
and live with him for ever.

If you have a baptismal candle, light it. If not take another candle, light it and declare:

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

We then affirm our baptismal promises:

I believe and trust in God the Father,
maker and sustainer of all things,
and in God the Son, my Saviour Jesus Christ,
and in God the Holy Spirit, giver of life and truth.
This is my faith.

Through God's grace,
I will forgive others as I am forgiven;
I will seek to love my neighbour as myself,
and strive for peace and justice;
I will accept the cost of following Jesus Christ
in my daily life and work;
with the whole Church
I will proclaim by word and action
the Good News of God in Christ.

Almighty Father,
grant that we your children
may never be ashamed
to confess the faith of Christ crucified,
but continue his faithful servants to our lives' end;
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

If you are on Facebook or Instagram, post:

Christ is Risen!

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Easter Day - 12th April

The discovery of the empty tomb and Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalene.



Reading: John 20:1-18

Question: This is the most important festival of the church, and we rejoice in Christ's resurrection and the new life open to all!
What does this new life mean for you?

Prayer: Jesus Christ our Saviour,
you have delivered us from death and sin.
You have brought with the dawn
a new beginning and an empty tomb;
grant us strength and humility
to enter into life.

Living Christ, you are risen from the dead!
Love reigns!
You are life stronger than death;
raise our eyes to see you
as the new day dawns;
for the glory of your holy name.

If you have not already done so, renew your baptismal promises (as suggested for Easter Eve).

Action: Celebrate... eat Easter eggs... have a glass of bubbly... and a special meal. **Christ is risen!!!**