



**EARLY ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, WHILE IT WAS
STILL DARK, MARY MAGDALENE
CAME TO THE TOMB AND SAW
THAT THE STONE HAD BEEN REMOVED...**

- JOHN 20:1



Dear Friends,

We want to make sure that whether you can connect with us on-line or not, that you can still connect with us. Please use this Holy Week devotional, knowing that your friends from NPC will be using it alongside you.

We look forward to the day when we can be together again.

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!

Peace,

Patrick

Holy Week Devotions



**THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS,
AND THE DARKNESS HAS NOT OVERCOME IT.**

- JOHN 1:5

Monday

Scripture: John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ² There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³ Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵ "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" ⁶ (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷ Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸ You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

Key Verse: *Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.*

Reflection: Think about the tension of this moment. Jesus knew what was coming. He knew the cross lay ahead of him. And yet, even with all that mounting anxiety, we have this so very tender moment, the scent in the air offering a brief respite for Jesus.

In what ways have you found respite these days? A candle? Cup of coffee? The sound of a birdsong, or perhaps a friend's voice? In what ways can you offer respite to someone else?

Prayer: Merciful God, this Holy Week may feel unlike any other we have experienced. Open our eyes, ears, and hearts to the ways you still try and break in with new life, breaking the tension with your love. Amen.

Tuesday

Scripture: John 12:20-26

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." ²² Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, 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. ²⁵ Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

Key Verse: *²⁴ Very truly, I tell you, 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.*

Reflection: As I write this, it is also pollen season. Invisible specks flying through the air that I don't even notice until I've gone through a box of tissues in an hour. Or the good old pine stuff. Bright yellow and so thick I feel like someone is throwing sand in my face.

I find it so interesting that something, which by its very design is created to bring new life, can be so frustratingly annoying.

And yet, growth never comes without some kind of discomfort. When a child complains that his legs hurt, that complaint is often followed by a growth spurt.

Growth and new life can and will be uncomfortable.

Right now, it may be easy to feel the discomfort. Can you feel the growth?

Prayer: Merciful God, no one ever said life would be easy, but sometimes it feels so incredibly hard. Please give me the strength to cling to your promise of new life. Amen.

Wednesday

Scripture: John 13:21-30

²¹ After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, "Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me." ²² The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. ²³ One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him; ²⁴ Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. ²⁵ So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to do." ²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the festival"; or, that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

Key Verse: *So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"*

Reflection: Betrayal comes in many forms. Sometimes it is an external betrayal. A friend or family member or institution betrays us. Sometimes it's internal. We do something we know we shouldn't. We cheat on a diet, for instance. Even other times the betrayal is internal and not our fault. We feel betrayed when our body breaks down and we can't do the things we were once able to do.

Where are you feeling that now? What would it take for you to let that betrayal go? To forgive and look ahead?

Prayer: Merciful, God, we try keep a stiff upper lip, to act as though nothing bothers us. But things do. Relationships fail. Bodies fail. And we hurt. Help us to remember that you hurt with us. We may try to leave you, but you never leave us. Help us cling to that promise. Amen.

Thursday

Scripture: John 13:31-35

³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³² If God has been glorified in him,^[a] God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³ Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ ³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Key verse: *I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.*

Reflection: Even as Jesus approaches the most difficult and painful part of his earthly life, he begins to shift the focus forward. How we can carry on his ministry and be his people in this world. And it seems so simple. Love. Love one another. Just as Jesus has loved us, so should we love one another.

Who needs to hear from you today, to know you love them? How can you communicate that love?

Prayer: Merciful God, your love is your command. Give us the strength to carry that love and to share it with others. For when we do, we lose nothing, but instead grow closer to you. Amen.

Friday

Scripture: John 19: 16b-30

So they took Jesus; ¹⁷ and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. ¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. ¹⁹ Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." ²⁰ 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. ²¹ 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.'" ²² Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." ²³ 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. ²⁴ 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 fulfill what the scripture says,

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

²⁵ And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

²⁸ After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Key Verse: *When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*

Reflection: We know it's not really finished. The story is not over. This year Holy week may have felt like it started weeks ago, But we know this story has not ended. We trust in a God who loves us so much, that he chose to bear all the pain of the world, that it might be taken away. This is no less true today. This story has not ended. New life lies ahead. Hold fast.

Prayer: Merciful God, You continue to be at work every single day. New life is around the corner. We trust in you. Be near us in this waiting.

Saturday

Scripture: John 19:38-42

³⁸ After these things, 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. ³⁹ Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰ They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹ 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. ⁴² And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Key Verse: *And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.*

Reflection: This passage is actually from Friday. Because they were in a hurry to bury Jesus before the Jewish Sabbath on Saturday, we don't have anything scriptural about what took place on Saturday.

And we don't like it. We want to know. Knowing would give us something to think about, something to reflect on, something to do.

But instead we wait. And we don't like to wait. We don't like to wait at the grocery store. We don't like to wait for test results, and we don't like to wait for Jesus to get out of that tomb.

But here we are. We wait.

Prayer: Lord God, this may be the most difficult day for us. Nothing to do. No way to be active. Give us the patience to wait for your promise. And help us to grow closer to you in our waiting. Your promise is coming. You will bring all things together for good. Amen.

Sunday

Scripture: John 20:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³ Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴ The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹² and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³ They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴ When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Key Verse: *Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord."*

Reflection: Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

It is here! The promise has come true. Everything Jesus said would happen has happened.

And yet, first Mary didn't recognize him. She was still weighed down with grief and didn't know that she was talking to Jesus. But when she knew, she knew.

Signs of life and love are all around us. Look around and see, for the love of God is with you. And there is no escaping that love. And where God's love is there is life.

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed!

Prayer: Almighty and everlasting God, you are alive! You are alive, and so are we! Thank you, Lord, for leading us and never leaving us. Help us to walk with you, not just this Easter day, but every day of our lives. Amen.