



Bloom: A Lenten Guidebook



HANCOCK CHURCH
LENT 2022

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A Letter from Your Ministers

Dear Hancock family,

We find ourselves once again at the threshold of Lent, the forty-day season leading up to Holy Week and Easter Sunday. In Lent, we anticipate the betrayal and death of Jesus, before emerging on Easter morning with the joy of the resurrection.

Lent is an opportunity to quiet our souls and acknowledge our griefs, hurts, and weaknesses as part of the fullness of the human experience. It's a good time to consider adopting a practice that changes the normal rhythms of your life. Many people choose to give something up for Lent as an act of holy solidarity with the suffering. Others "take up" something for Lent—incorporating a new act of worship, prayer, or justice into their weekly routine. As a Christian community, we gather to walk through this time of absence and darkness together.

This year's Lenten guide is a tool to help you in your journey. On its own or in combination with other practices, our hope is that the readings, questions, and prayers in this guide will inspire deeper personal reflection. This year's guide centers the scripture readings for each Sunday and encourages you to dive deeper into the central stories of our faith.

In addition to this year's Lenten workbook, you are also encouraged to pick up a paperwhite flower bulb at the church. The time it takes paperwhite to grow from bulb to flower is almost exactly the length of the season of Lent. We invite you to plant one and watch its growth along this journey.

Lent takes place in the transitional season between Winter and Spring. As we travel further into the liturgical depths this season, the world around us will become warmer and brighter, with all the charms of springtime. Let that tension be a reminder that beautiful things are always present in seasons of difficulty. Something is always growing, unfurling just beneath the surface. The theme for this year's guide is "Bloom," and we invite you this year to consider what might be waiting to bloom in your life, just beneath the surface.

Yours in faith, hope, and love,
The Hancock Ministry Team

Beloved is Where We Begin

As we begin this Lenten season, may this poem by Jan Richardson offer a word of blessing:

If you would enter into the wilderness,
do not begin without a blessing.
Do not leave without hearing who you are:
Beloved,
named by the One who has traveled this path before you.
Do not go without letting it echo in your ears,
and if you find it is hard to let it into your heart,
do not despair.
That is what this journey is for.

I cannot promise this blessing will free you
from danger,
from fear,
from hunger
or thirst,
from the scorching of sun
or the fall of the night.
But I can tell you that on this path there will be help.
I can tell you that on this way there will be rest.

I can tell you
that you will know the strange graces
that come to our aid only on a road such as this,
that fly to meet us
bearing comfort and strength,
that come alongside us for no other cause
than to lean themselves toward our ear
and with their curious insistence
whisper our name:
Beloved.
Beloved.
Beloved.

Hancock 2022 Lenten Schedule

Ash Wednesday Worship

Join us virtually or in person on Wednesday, March 2 at 7:00pm for our Ash Wednesday service, which will include an opportunity to receive ashes and a blessing.

Drive-by Ashes

This year, there will also be two opportunities to stop by the church and receive ashes during the day on Ash Wednesday. Ministers will be outside from 6:30-7:30am and then again from 12:00-1:00pm on Wednesday, March 2. Participants will drive under the portico, around the back of the church, and then through the exit driveway. A minister will meet them at the end of the exit driveway to offer them ashes and a blessing through the car window.

Sunday Evening Worship

During Lent, we invite you to join us once again for Evening Worship at Hancock! Worship will be on Sundays at 4:00pm in Clark Hall.

Monday Small Group

On Monday nights during Lent, join your ministers from 7-7:30pm for a contemplative service via Zoom, including a reading and an opportunity to share our prayer concerns.

Stations of the Cross

This year, we will once again be featuring Stations of the Cross around the outside of Hancock Church, using the work of Mary Button. This year's collection is called "Stations of the Cross and Resurrection." They will be set up outside Hancock on April 15 and 16.

Palm Sunday and Outdoor Reception

2022's Palm Sunday will combine beloved traditions with new delights. We will have palms for processing and waving in the sanctuary, along with a video palm procession. After worship, we will also have a Palm Sunday bagged brunch. Hosanna!

Holy Week

- The Maundy Thursday service will be at 7:00pm on April 14th. The River Rock Band and ministers will lead us in a service of remembrance of the events of that night.
- The Good Friday service will be at 7:00pm on April 15th, and will feature the bells and will be held in the sanctuary.
- On Easter morning, join us for sunrise at 6:00am at the Old Belfry, and in the sanctuary at either 9:00am or 11:00am.
- At 10:00am we will have a special Easter coffee hour and an Easter egg hunt for the kids.

Week I

Introduction

Our Lenten season begins at a tomb, as we bear witness to the death of Lazarus. His sisters, Mary and Martha, cry out to Jesus in their grief, and Jesus joins them in mourning his beloved. But Lazarus' story is not yet over. This year, our Lenten story begins with new life. We watch as Jesus calls Lazarus out of his tomb, unwrapping his bandages with the tenderness of a green leaf, unfurling itself from the bulb.

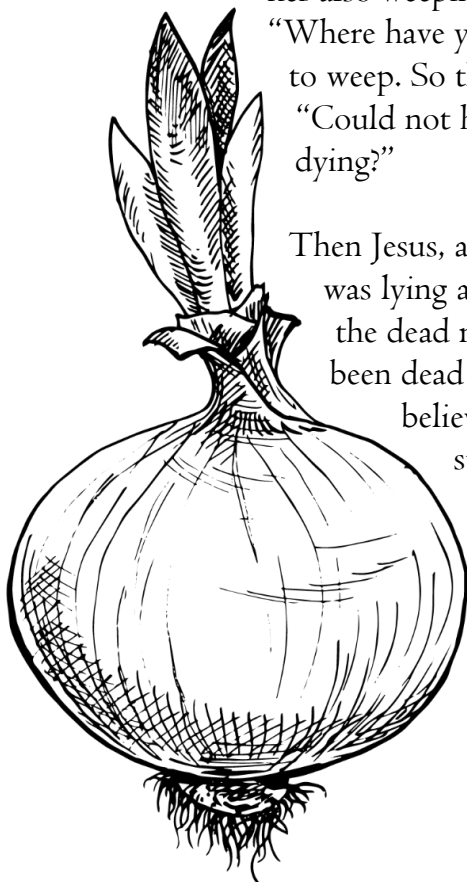
Rooted in the Word

John 11:1-3, 17, 32-44, NRSV

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany--the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So, the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" So, they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."



Questions for reflection:

Which character in this story do you feel most connected with today?

What are you grieving this season?

Are there parts of your life where you feel trapped?

What brighter reality might God be beckoning you into today?



TO LIVE IN THIS WORLD
YOU MUST BE ABLE
TO DO THREE THINGS:
TO LOVE WHAT IS MORTAL;
TO HOLD IT
AGAINST YOUR BONES KNOWING
YOUR OWN LIFE DEPENDS ON IT;
AND, WHEN THE TIME COMES
TO LET IT GO,
TO LET IT GO.

+ MARY OLIVER

I Lazarus

by Stephen Rybicki

What could I make of the grass
But a gate to the skies
Looking up
Clouds floating by
Like the shapes of the dead ones
As radiant as angels

And when I opened the earth
Their tombs were all empty
My mother and father
The first to speak
Come here son
O how we missed you
All I could do was weep

A BLESSING FOR YOUR WEEK

May our tender Christ take you by the hand and lead you out of places of death and isolation and into the light of day and the warmth of community.

Amen.

Week 2

Introduction

This week's reading is a story unique to the Gospel of John. Instead of communion, John tells us that at the Last Supper, Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. This vulnerable act of service is the root of what is to come. It is the frame that holds the story of Holy Week.

We begin here. With tender care. With Jesus gently kneeled at the disciple's feet.

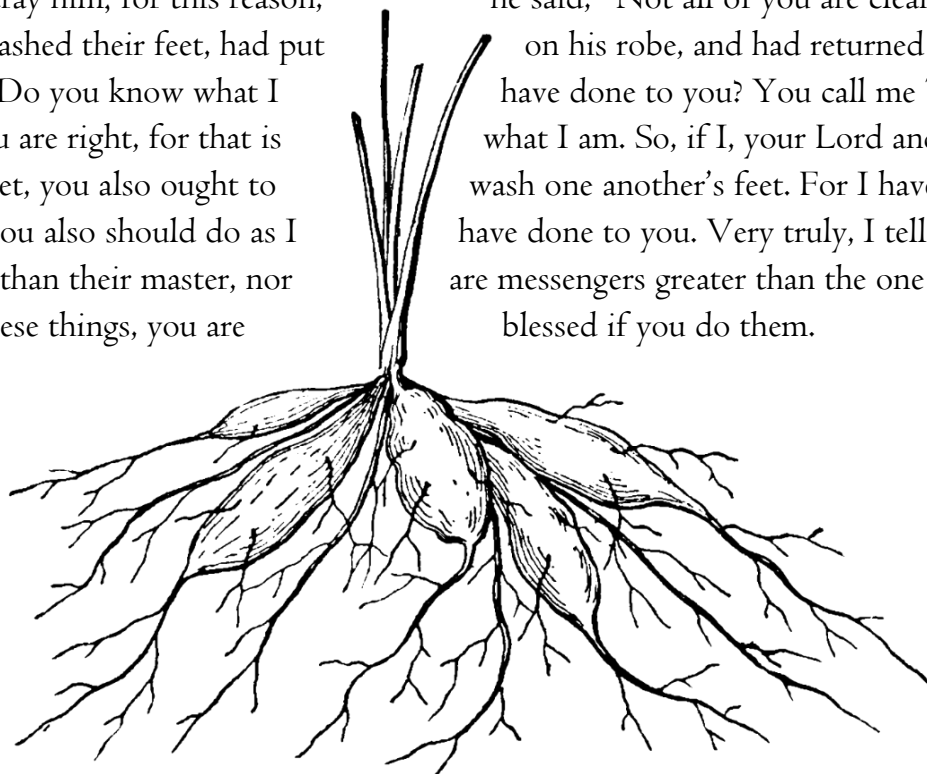
Rooted in the Word

John 13:1-17, NRSV

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. Very truly, I tell you, servants are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

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. Very truly, I tell you, servants are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."



Questions for reflection:

Why do you think John included this detail in his account of Jesus? What does it mean for our story to be rooted in this kind of service?

What are the most significant moments in your life when you received care from others?

How comfortable are you with receiving care from others?

How might Jesus' actions here inform your service to others?



**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.**

+ JOHN 13:5

A BLESSING FOR YOUR WEEK

May you be the recipient of tender care. May Jesus wash away the dust and dirt of life and leave you refreshed and ready. And may you care for others in the gentle tradition of our Christ. Amen.

Blessing You Cannot Turn Back

by Jan Richardson

As if you could stop this blessing
from washing over you.

As if you could turn it back,
could return it from your body

to the bowl,

from the bowl

to the pitcher,

from the pitcher

to the hand

that set this blessing on its way.

As if you could change the course
by which this blessing flows.

As if you could control how it

pours over you—

unbidden,

unsought,

unasked,

yet startling in the way

it matches the need

you did not know you had.

As if you could

become undrenched.

As if you could

resist gathering it up

in your two hands

and letting your body

follow the arc this blessing makes.

Week 3

Introduction

This week, our story turns to face the difficult road ahead. Our story begins to unfold as Jesus is captured, bound, and taken to the high priest. Meanwhile, Simon Peter is recognized in the crowd as a follower of Jesus. Fearing for his life, Peter he denies it. In fact, *three times*, Peter—one of Jesus' most eager and dedicated disciples—pretends not to know him. We remember the weight of that betrayal today, but we also hold Peter tenderly, knowing that we are all capable of great good and great hurt.

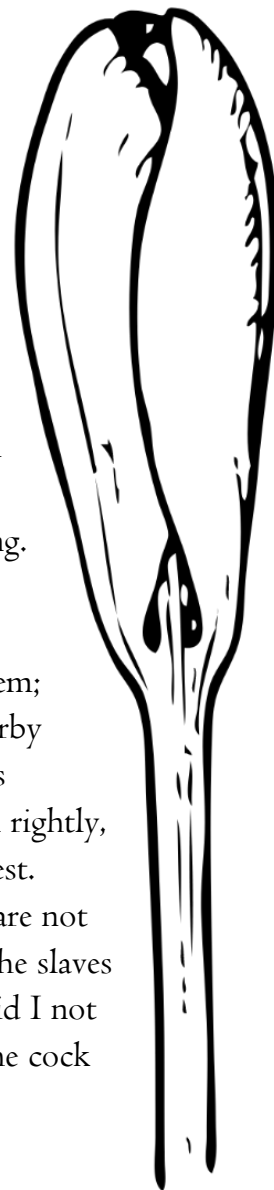
Rooted in the Word

John 18:12-27, NRSV

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.

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.



Questions for reflection:

What character in this week's story do you feel most connected with today?

Are you carrying any bitterness today for the past wrongs of others? Are there wrongs that you have done that you need to forgive yourself for?



WHOEVER YOU ARE,
NO MATTER HOW LONELY,
THE WORLD OFFERS ITSELF
TO YOUR IMAGINATION,
CALLS TO YOU LIKE THE WILD GEESE,
HARSH AND EXCITING -
OVER AND OVER
ANNOUNCING YOUR PLACE
IN THE FAMILY OF THINGS.
+ MARY OLIVER

A BLESSING FOR YOUR WEEK

May you hold out the tender parts of your heart to God. May you confess the times you have done wrong and receive the grace you have already been given. And may you feel the soft bud of forgiveness open within you.
Amen.

The Look *by Elizabeth Browning*

THE SAVIOUR
looked on Peter.
Ay, no word,
No gesture of reproach;
the Heavens serene
Though heavy
with armed justice,
did not lean
Their thunders that way:
the forsaken Lord
Looked only on the traitor.
None record
What that look was,
none guess;
for those who have seen
Wronged lovers loving
through a death-pang keen,
Or pale-cheeked martyrs
smiling to a sword,
Have missed Jehovah
at the judgment-call.
And Peter, from the height
of blasphemy—
“I never knew this man”—
did quail and fall,
As knowing straight
THAT GOD;
and turnèd free
And went out speechless
from the face of all,
And filled the silence,

Week 4

Introduction

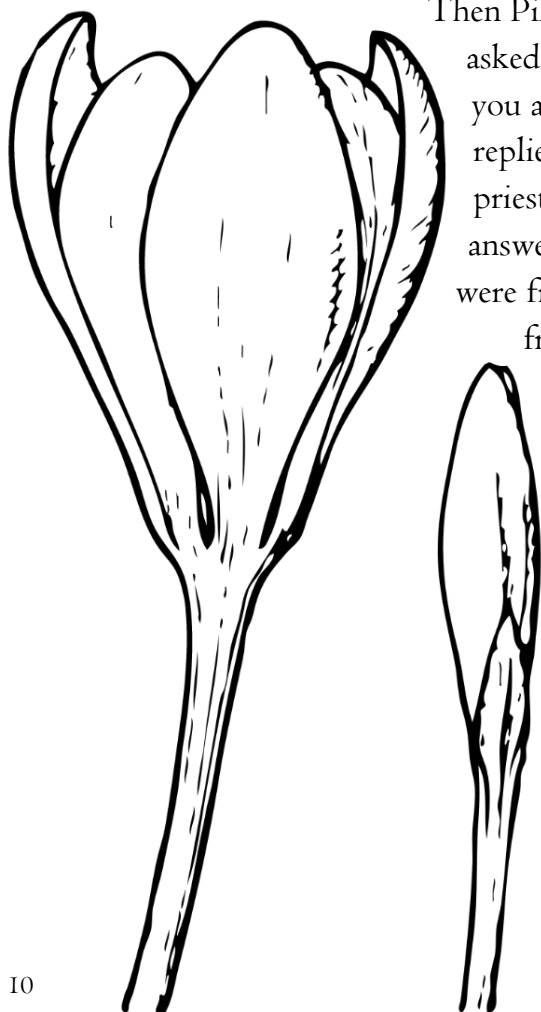
This week, we hold our breath as the crowd is given the chance to save Jesus. Pilate invites them to choose a prisoner to release from the death penalty. But instead of Jesus, they choose Barabbas. Before turning him over to the mercy of the crowd, Pilate asks Jesus if he really is a king—really a threat to the empire. But Jesus is not interested in the kind of power Pilate is sworn to protect. He is a threat, but one of a different kind. Jesus replies, “I came into the world to testify to the truth.”

Rooted in the Word

John 18:28-40, NRSV

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 fulfill 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?” After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, “I find no case against him. 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.



Questions for reflection:

In what ways have you, like the crowd, participated in systems that have harmed others?

Can you think of some figures in history who have lost their life for bearing witness to the truth?

What truth do you bear witness to? How might your testimony bring life and justice to the world?



THERE ARE
THINGS YOU CAN'T REACH.
BUT YOU CAN REACH OUT TO THEM,
AND ALL DAY LONG.
THE WIND, THE BIRD FLYING AWAY.
THE IDEA OF GOD.

+ MARY OLIVER

A BLESSING FOR YOUR WEEK

May you walk the difficult road of Jesus, rejecting powers and principalities and reaching instead for the justice of our God. May the Holy Spirit bloom within you. And may you find, right when you need it, the strength and Grace to testify to the truth.

Amen.

For Broken Trust

by John O'Donohue

Sometimes there is an invisible raven
That will fly low to pierce the shell of trust
When it has been brought near to ground.

When he strikes, he breaks the faith of years
That had built quietly through the seasons
In the rhythm of tried and tested experience.

With one strike, the shelter is down
And the back yoke of truth turned false
Would poison the garden of memory.

Now the heart's dream turns to requiem,
Offering itself a poultice of tears
To cleanse from loss what cannot be lost.

Through all the raw and awkward days,
Dignity will hold the heart to grace
Lest it squander its dream on a ghost.

Often torn ground is ideal for seed
That can take root disappointment deep
enough

To yield a harvest that cannot wither:

A deeper light to anoint the eyes,
Passion that opens wings in the heart,
A subtle radiance of countenance:
The soul ready for its true other.

Week 5

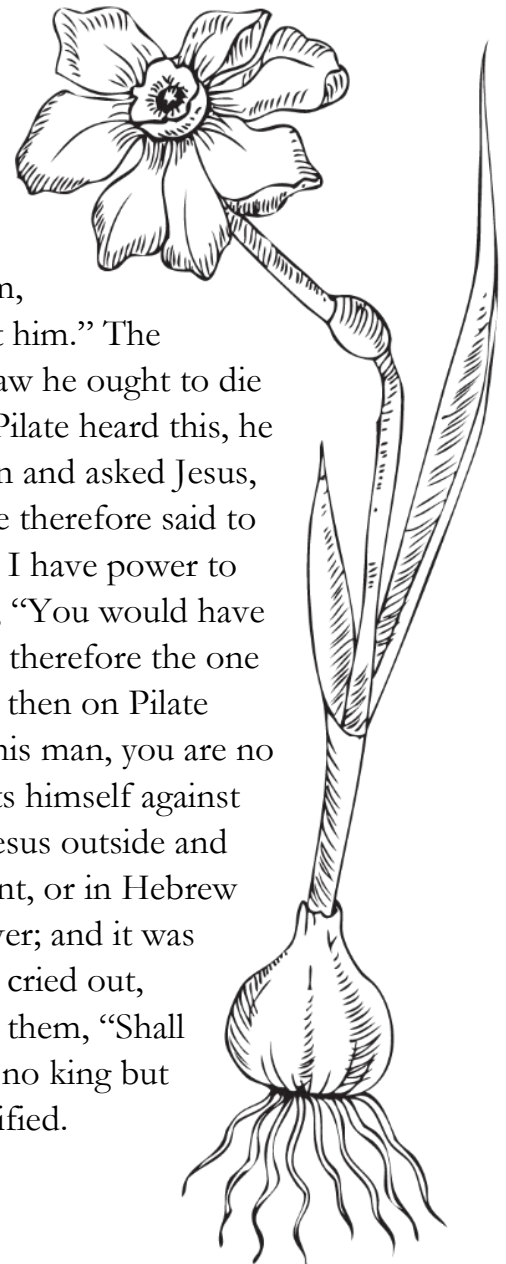
Introduction

Our story continues with a moment of heartbreak. We watch powerless as Jesus is mocked and flogged. The religious authorities align themselves with the power of empire, and seal Jesus' fate. This is the tragedy at the center of the Christian story. Our faith is built on grief and solidarity with the ones who suffer at the hands of the State. This is the bitter beauty of the Jesus story.

Rooted in the Word

John 19:1-16a, NRSV

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." 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.



Questions for reflection:

What does it mean to worship a God who was mocked and beaten by the powerful?
What parts of your life are in need of the radical forgiveness of our God?
How might we offer acts of solidarity to those in need?



**HERE IS A STORY
TO BREAK YOUR HEART.
ARE YOU WILLING?
+ MARY OLIVER**

A BLESSING FOR YOUR WEEK

May you feel the empathy of our God who has known suffering and knows us in our own suffering. May your heart beat for the oppressed and downtrodden. And may the delicate flower of loss plant new beauty in your life.
Amen.

Untitled Poem *by Rainer Maria Rilke*

I am praying again, Awesome One.
Your hear me again, as words
from the depths of me
rush toward you in the wind.
I've been scattered in pieces,
torn by conflict,
mocked by laughter,
washed down in drink.
In alleyways I sweep myself up
out of garbage and broken glass.
With my half-mouth I stammer you,
who are eternal in your symmetry.
I lift to you my half-hands
in wordless beseeching, that I may find again
the eyes with which I once beheld you.
I am a house gutted by fire
where only the guilty sometimes sleep
before the punishment that devours them
hounds them out into the open.
I am a city by the sea
sinking into a toxic tide.
I am strange to myself,
as though someone unknown
had poisoned my mother as she carried me.
It's here in all the pieces of my shame
that now I find myself again.
I yearn to belong to something,
to be contained in an all-embracing mind
that sees me as a single thing.
I yearn to be held
in the great hands of your heart—
oh, let them take me now.
Into them I place these fragments, my life,
and you, God—spend them however you want.

Holy Week

Introduction

Our reading this week takes us back a few chapters. We find Jesus not approaching the cross, but atop a donkey, riding into Jerusalem. With the rest of the story in mind, we can give Palm Sunday the weight it deserves. There is celebration, but it is tinged and heavy. As Jesus rides into Jerusalem, there is no question that things are about to change.

Rooted in the Word

John 12:12-27, NRSV

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So, they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!”

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written:

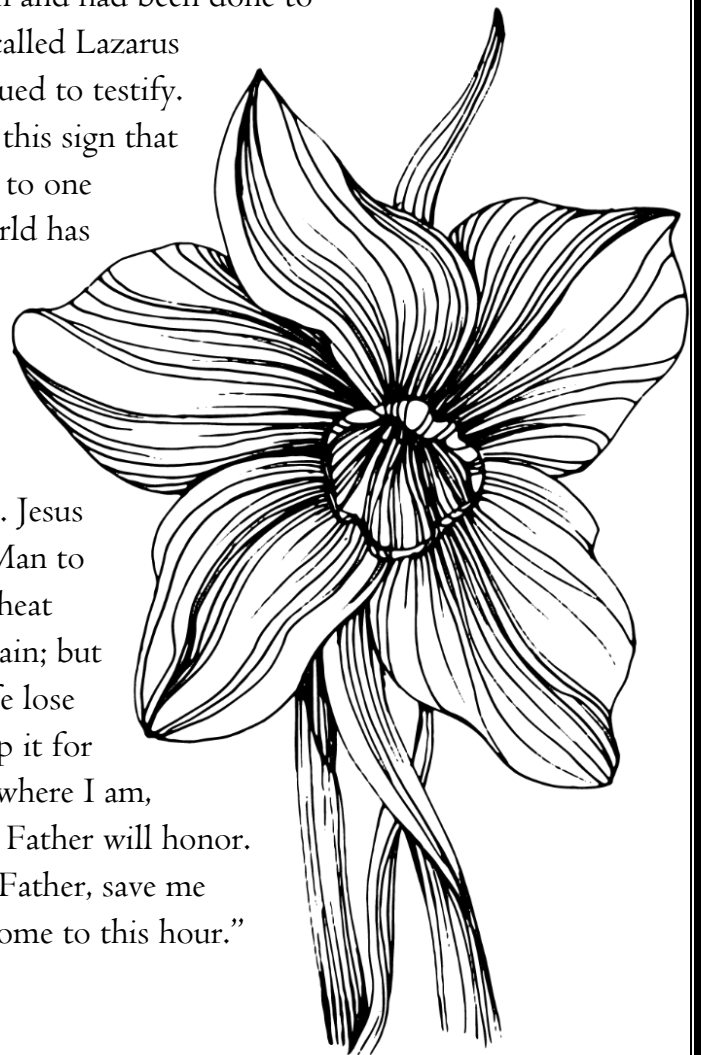
“Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!”

His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to

him. So, the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify.

It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him. The Pharisees then said to one another, “You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!”

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 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. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. “Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour.”



Questions for reflection:

Imagine you were in the crowd that day, witnessing Jesus' arrival. What might you be thinking and feeling?

Are there moments in your own life where celebration was tinged with grief?

Where do you see the presence of God in your life?



**EVERY DAY
I SEE OR I HEAR
SOMETHING
THAT MORE OR LESS
KILLS ME
WITH DELIGHT,
THAT LEAVES ME
LIKE A NEEDLE
IN THE HAYSTACK
OF LIGHT.
+ MARY OLIVER**

Palm Sunday *by Kathy Coffey*

We know the inevitable end,
yet walk this way with song.
With each step into story
the story permeates us.
This annual trudge to Calvary
the impulse to Jerusalem
no angel encouragement
no accompanying miracle.
We cluster like women who weep
recruited like unwilling Simon
offering our crooked consolations,
yet Christ took comfort from a thief.
Girls lift altar cloths aloft
borne in graceful arms like shrouds
or banners, woven in white linen

A BLESSING FOR YOUR WEEK

May you witness Jesus on the horizon, moving closer and closer to you. May you take comfort in our God who is with us and for us, not a conqueror but a companion. And may you journey together into what lies ahead.
Amen.

Easter Sunday

Introduction

Finally, our journey leads us to the bright hope of Easter morning. We have walked the difficult depths, have watched and waited hoping for new life, and today we can finally say: Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! And, as the popular hymn says: “Made like him, like him we rise!”

Rooted in the Word

John 20:11-18, NRSV

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; 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. 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.”

When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 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.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). 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.’”

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.



Questions for reflection:

Who have you lost that you would most like to be reunited with?

Where have you witnessed rebirth and resurrection in your own life?

How might we bear witness, like Mary, to new life in our midst?

Easter Day *by Oscar Wilde*

THE silver trumpets rang across the Dome:
The people knelt upon the ground with awe:
And borne upon the necks of men I saw,
Like some great God, the Holy Lord of Rome.

Priest-like, he wore a robe more white than foam,
And, king-like, swathed himself in royal red,
Three crowns of gold rose high upon his head:
In splendour and in light the Pope passed home.

My heart stole back across wide wastes of years
To One who wandered by a lonely sea,
And sought in vain for any place of rest:
'Foxes have holes, and every bird its nest,

I, only I, must wander wearily,
And bruise my feet,
and drink wine salt with tears.'



A BLESSING FOR YOUR WEEK

May you find hope in the living God. May the sun and the rain and the tender leaves of growing plants awaken you to the new life all around you. May you take your place in the family of things. Amen.