

GOOD FRIDAY

In advance, find a cross or crucifix to place in front of participants, keep it covered with a simple cloth until the appointed time.

Opening Collect

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Reading from the Gospel of John: John 18:1-19:1-30

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

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. 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. 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. So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he 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 fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." 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. 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.

If a reflection is provided by your local clergy, read, listen or watch it now.

Or read about the Martyrs of Memphis below.

Reflections:

- What are some examples of sacrifices being made right now in the midst of the pandemic?
- How have you benefitted in your life from the sacrifices of others?
- What sacrifices are you making, for others and for yourself?

The Prayers

We pray for people everywhere according to their needs.

- For the Church throughout the world, its unity in witness and service, for bishops and other ministers, and the people whom they serve, for all members of our congregation.
- For all nations and peoples of the earth, for our president, Congress, the United Nations, and all who serve the common good.
- For all who suffer and are afflicted in body or in mind especially those afflicted by Covid-19, for the hungry and homeless, destitute and oppressed, the sick, the wounded and crippled, those in loneliness, fear and anguish, those who face temptation, doubt and despair, for the sorrowful and bereaved, for prisoners, captives and those in mortal danger, and all who care for them.
- For those who have not received the Gospel of Christ, who have never heard the word of salvation, or lost their faith, or are hardened by sin or indifference, the contemptuous and scornful, the enemies of the cross of Christ and persecutors of his followers, and those who in the name of Christ have persecuted others.

Veneration of the Cross

At this time, a cross is placed in the sight of all. After a period of reflective silence, all say:

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

If we have died with him, we shall also live with him;

If we endure, we shall also reign with him.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,

Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Concluding prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, we pray you to set your passion, cross, and death between your judgment and our souls, now and in the hour of our death. Give mercy and grace to the living; pardon and rest to the dead; to your holy Church peace and concord; and to us sinners everlasting life and glory; for with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Martyrs of Memphis

Memphis suffered periodic epidemics of yellow fever, a mosquito-borne viral infection, throughout the 19th century. The worst of the epidemics occurred in the summer of 1878, when 5,150 Memphians died. Five years earlier, a group of Episcopal nuns from the recently formed Sisterhood of St. Mary arrived in Memphis to operate the St. Mary's School for Girls, which was relocated to the cathedral site. When the 1878 epidemic struck, a number of priests and nuns (both Protestant and Catholic), doctors, and even the proprietress of a bordello stayed behind to tend to the sick and dying. The Episcopal nuns' superior, Sister Constance, three other Episcopal nuns, and two Episcopal priests are known throughout the Anglican Communion as "Constance and Her Companions" or the "Martyrs of Memphis". Added to the Episcopal Church's Lesser Feasts and Fasts in 1981, their feast day (September 9) commemorates their sacrifices.

- Sister Constance (néé Caroline Louise Darling, b. Medway, Mass., 1846), superior of the work at Memphis, headmistress of St. Mary's School for Girls.
- Sister Thecla, sacristan of St. Mary's Cathedral and its school chapel, instructor in music and grammar (English and Latin)
- Sister Ruth, nurse at Trinity Infirmary, New York
- Sister Frances, a newly professed nun given charge of the Church Home orphanage
- The Rev. Charles Carroll Parsons, rector of Grace Episcopal Church, Memphis; former U.S. Army artillery commander, West Point alumnus and professor (Served with classmate Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer in Kansas, defense counsel in Custer's 1867 court-martial trial.)
- The Rev. Louis S. Schuyler, newly ordained assistant rector at Parsons' prior parish, Holy Innocents Episcopal Church, Hoboken, New Jersey.

We give thee thanks and praise, O God of compassion, for the Heroic witness of Constance and her companions, who, in a time of plague and pestilence, were steadfast in their care for the sick and the dying, and loved not their own lives, even unto death. Inspire in us a like love and commitment to those in need, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ...