

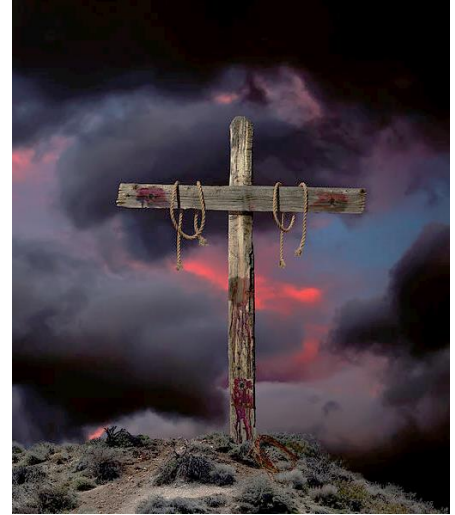
Holy Saturday – ‘It is finished’

A simple liturgy for use during the Covid-19 Pandemic

*Consider placing a cross on a table, perhaps making one out of two twigs.
Sit for a few moments to gather your thoughts.
Breathe deeply and slowly.*

Gathering in God’s Presence

We gather at the foot of an empty cross.
We watch for signs of hope in the midst of despair.
We wait for the sting of death to be overcome.
But not now, not yet.
Today we watch and wait.
But joy when the morning comes.



Opening Prayer

We have heard your words of hope:
‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’

We have heard your words of promise:
‘Today you will be with me in paradise.’

We have heard your words of sacrifice:
‘Into your hands I commend my spirit.’

But now we stand before an empty cross.
Where are you, Lord,
and where are we?
Is this really the end?
Can it really be finished?
Help us to watch and wait,
to stand in the in-between time,
and look beyond the emptiness of ‘now’ to the hope of ‘but not yet’.
Amen.

We listen to God’s Word + John 19: 30-42

³⁰When Jesus had received the wine, he said, ‘**It is finished.**’ Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

³¹Since 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.

³²Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. ³⁵(He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.)

³⁶These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'None of his bones shall be broken.' ³⁷And again another passage of scripture says, 'They will look on the one whom they have pierced.'

³⁸After 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. ³⁹Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews.

⁴¹Now 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. ⁴²And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

A Time of Reflection

1. What images does the word 'empty' bring to mind for you?
2. How patient are you at waiting?
3. How does the 'watching and waiting' of Holy Saturday speak to you in our current situation?
4. If you're able to go for a walk today, walk slowly, think about the empty cross and Jesus in the tomb and listen to the sounds around you. If you're not able, sit by an open window and watch and listen. What do you notice?

As you reflect on these words you might like to listen to the following piece of music: 'Nuvole Bianche' by Ludovico Einaudi <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VR-6AS0-l4>

A Time of Prayer

'It is finished.'

Now, Lord Jesus,
you have finished your work.

You have convinced us of our sin
and you have forgiven it.

You have convinced us of your way
and you have welcomed us along it.

You have shown us a foretaste of heaven
and received us into your Kingdom.



You have done all that's needed
and it will be for your Spirit soon
to continue your work in us.

Having overcome the sin of the world,
death is a small obstacle.

Just as you foretold
that you would be handed over to be crucified
and this has come true;
also as you foretold,
on the third day,
you will rise again.
And we will be your witnesses. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
forever and ever.
Amen.

Concluding Prayer

We are silent before your empty cross.
We are broken in our emptiness.
We are thankful for your sacrifice.
We look forward in hope.

Stay with us, O God,
as we gaze upon the cross,
Stay with us as we await the joy of tomorrow.
Bless us, O God
and bless the world which you love so much.
Amen.

