

'Tree of Life' Meditation

A confession and meditation for the brokenness in our world, based on Revelation's image of the Tree of Life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

If you wish, you can print the labyrinth at the end of this document to trace with a finger as part of your reflection. You can colour it in if you like, or you can add leaves.

The labyrinth has three outer sections and a central spiral, which leads to the centre and then out by a short route. You could use each outer section to pray to one person of the trinity, then bring your thoughts together to pray to God who is one as you reach the centre. Finally, determine how you will make your prayers part of your life as you leave the labyrinth and come back into the world.



The Garden of Eden...

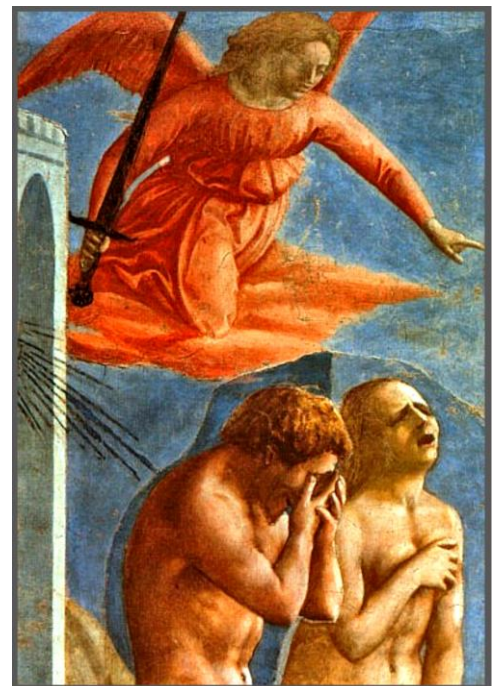
"And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (Genesis 2:9)

"Then the Lord God said, '... Now, lest the man reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life." (Genesis 3:22b-24)

Right back at the start of the Bible, we hear of the Tree of Life. Broken humanity is kept away from the tree for their own protection and banished from God's garden.

We live now in this time of apart-ness, longing for the healing and restoration that is God's kingdom.

**Father God,
we acknowledge the brokenness of our world,
of your world,
and we confess our part in that brokenness.
Forgive us, we pray,
not for any merit of our own,
but for your mercy's sake.
Amen.**



"Expulsion from the Garden of Eden"
Masaccio, 1425

The Garden of Gethsemane...

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26.36-46)

In another garden, 2000 years ago, a sorrowful Jewish man kneels and whispers, "Your will, not mine, be done." Another garden quickly follows, and a tomb.

**Jesus our brother,
the price you paid for our redemption was great indeed.
You faced the wall of separation that we had built,
and bore on your shoulders the curse that was ours to bear.
Great is your salvation.
Amen.**



**The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane
Doménikos Theotokópoulos (El Greco)**

The Garden Tomb

At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. (John 19.41-42)

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!" (Luke 24.1-6)

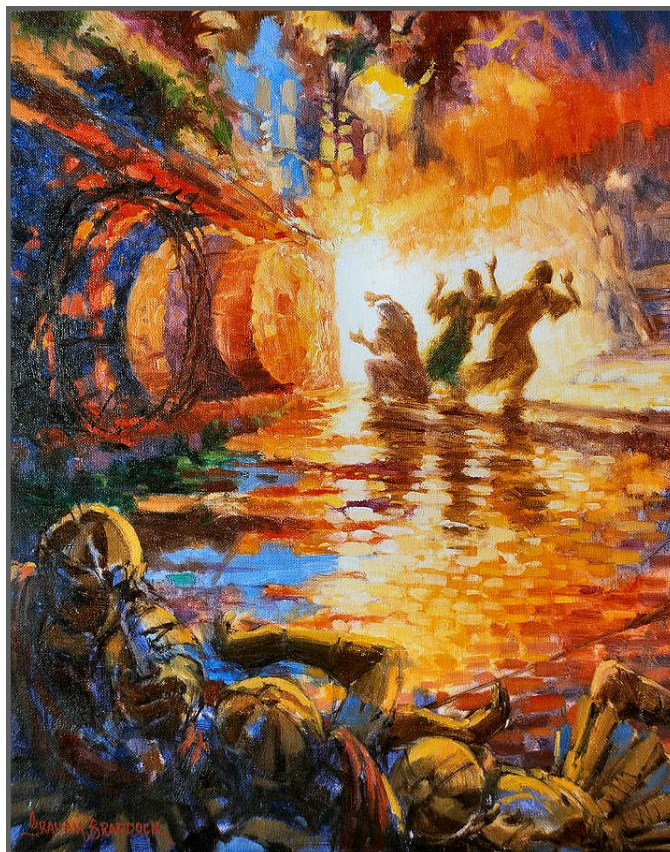
The tomb is broken open from the inside, and the death and mourning and crying and pain that have marred God's creation for so long are defeated and crushed. The garden is restored and the Tree of Life sprouts again in ground that once was cursed.

Holy Spirit, our guide,

**We know that the power of death is ultimately defeated,
but we live in a world that still crumbles and dies.**

**Grant us vision to see the garden reclaiming the ruins of the broken world
and beautifying that which was spoiled.**

Amen.



'Women At The Tomb' by Graham Braddock

The Heavenly City

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 22.1-5)

We see the tree growing in the city of the world, and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. Here, God lives with all who love him, Eden restored. We live under God's light as the sun, and drink freely from the water of life. The curse is no more, and we walk, as once we did, with The Lord God in the cool of the day.

**Merciful Lord,
May we take these leaves,
which are for the healing of the nations,
and apply them to the wounds and scars of our time.
May we, who see your face,
work in the light of your presence
towards the restoring of your garden here on earth.
Amen.**

