

*St Andrew & St Mary, Grantchester
St Mark's, Newnham*



**Readings, reflections,
music and images for use
at home, or outside,
during the weekdays of
Holy Week 2021**

Monday

Bible Reading

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."* - John 12:1-8

Reflection

Think about Mary and her act of anointing. Mary recognises the importance of the moment, and responds to a need. The perfume was possibly her most valuable possession (three hundred denarii would be nearly a year's wage for a labourer).

In anointing Jesus' feet she is almost literally pouring out her love, in a very humble, very physical act. The writer Mary Gordon calls it a "Sabbath of the skin".

In Luke's account the woman (unnamed in Luke) first washed Jesus' feet with her tears and dries them with her hair. This is an embodied act, worship with salty tears, hair and perfumed feet.

Music suggestion – [click here](#) to listen

*Drop, drop, slow tears,
and bathe those beautiful feet,
which brought from heaven
the news and Prince of Peace.*

*Cease not, wet eyes,
his mercies to entreat;
to cry for vengeance
sin doth never cease.*

*In your deep floods
drown all my faults and fears;
nor let his eye
see sin, but through my tears.*

A physical act of worship.

If you go on a daily walk (or outside) today, perhaps take some time to breathe deeply and enjoy the smells of spring. If you can find some blossom smell it. Imagine the home of Lazarus being filled with the smell of perfume. Try to imagine what Mary was feeling as she anointed Jesus. What is the 'all' you could give?

Have you ever thought of your body as a vehicle for worship? In society, we are often told our bodies need to look a certain way or be a certain way. In the incarnation, God took up the human body as God's own, flaws and all. We are called to lead fully embodied lives, breaking bread and sharing wine together, being in our bodies as well as our minds. Perhaps today as you remember Mary's act of love in anointing Jesus, also remember your own body, your hair and your tears.

Tuesday

Bible Reading

²⁷ “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. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” - John 12:27-28

Reflection

The idea of Jesus’s soul being troubled is an interesting one. Jesus is fully human, and fully divine, and it is perhaps here that he experiences the depths of humanity, the feeling of a troubled soul. I have often thought that the feeling of your soul being troubled is the feeling of being far from God. The crucifixion, the desertion of Christ on the cross and the cry of dereliction, is, Janet Soskice argues, the separation of God from God. But this allows for the ecstatic reunion, not just for Christ, but for the whole of creation. It is for this reason he has come to this hour.

Reflect on the notion of a troubled soul. What does it mean for you?

Music suggestion – click [here](#) to listen

<i>Libera nos,</i>	<i>Release us,</i>
<i>salva nos,</i>	<i>save us,</i>
<i>justifica nos,</i>	<i>justify us,</i>
<i>O beata Trinitas.</i>	<i>O blessed Trinity.</i>

This piece of music is one that I turn to when my soul is troubled.

A physical act of worship.

On your daily walk, or if you take some time to be in nature today, think about God glorifying Jesus's name. What does that mean? What does it mean for us to glorify God's name?

God's voice comes for our sake, not for Jesus. Jesus is a part of God, so directly after the moment of profound humanity comes confirmation of his divinity. Jesus has been glorified by God, and he knows this because he is God. In being fully human, he is fully divine.

Perhaps by exploring the fullness of humanity, we might also find holiness.



Sorrowful Saint- Scott Erickson

Wednesday

Bible Reading

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^l ²⁷ After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to do." - John 13:21-27

Reflection

Judas is probably not the first person we identify with in the Passion narrative. I think most Christians would be there with the nervous disciples asking: "Lord, who is it?" and feeling relief when the piece of bread passes us by. But although John's Gospel is especially condemning of Judas, none of the Gospels explain exactly why he betrayed Jesus. It could have been greed, it could have been predestination, it could have been that he simply thought he was doing the right thing. Perhaps he thought Jesus needed to be questioned, that if he were truly the Messiah, things would work out for him. Perhaps he thought he was acting according to God's will, or maybe he was scared.

Music suggestion – [click here](#) to listen

*Timor et tremor
venerunt super me
et caligo cecidit
super me.*

*Miserere mei,
Domine, miserere;
quoniam in te confidit
anima mea.*

*Exaudi, Deus,
deprecationem meam,
quia refugium meum
es tu et adiutor fortis.*

*Domine, invocavi te,
non confundar.*

*Fear and trembling
have come upon me
and darkness has fallen
upon me.*

*Have pity on me,
Lord, have pity;
because in thee
my soul trusts.*

*Hear, O God,
my prayer,
because thou art my refuge
and my strong helper.*

*Lord, I have called on thee,
I will not be confounded.*

A physical act of worship.

As you walk today, remember Jesus washing feet, even the feet of his betrayer. As you eat today, remember Jesus, sharing bread, even with Judas. Judas's betrayal is a vital part of the Passion. Judas now is defined by his betrayal, and perhaps we forget that Jesus still loves him, in the physical act of washing his feet and sharing bread.

We have all been closer to Judas than we would probably care to admit. Turning away from Christ and doing what we think is the right thing, or even the easiest thing. Christ demands more. Jesus is there giving his body out of love, washing feet and sharing food, even with the one he knows will betray him. Jesus's all giving love is hard to aspire to, but that is our most necessary challenge. Perhaps sometimes we have to betray our attachments to what we think is our religion, in order to be faithful to the deeper truth of love within it.

Maundy Thursday

Bible Reading

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, 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.” - John 13:31-35

Reflection

This passage is read after the washing of feet. Jesus’s commandment therefore, to love one another “just as I have loved you”, comes after a very physical, very embodied example of love. Love which is prepared to get a bit mucky washing feet, and taking the position of servant in doing so. Love which ultimately dies for the world which knew him not. *Solomia Kazanivska, Washing of the Feet*



This is a hard commandment to follow, and one which we should all think about at least once a day! This is love which sees a betrayer, and a denier, and loves them anyway. This is love which plumbs the depths of humanity, and loves in the darkness.

Music suggestion – click [here](#) to listen

*Ubi caritas et amor,
Deus ibi est.*

*Ubi caritas et amor,
Deus ibi est.*

*Congregavit nos
in unum Christi amor.*

*Congregavit nos
in unum Christi amor.*

*Exsultemus,
et in ipso jucundemur.*

*Timeamus,
et amemus Deum vivum.*

*Et ex corde
diligamus nos sincero.*

*Et ex corde
diligamus nos sincero.*

*Ubi caritas et amor,
Deus ibi est.*

Amen

*Where charity and love are,
there God is.*

*Where charity and love are,
there God is.*

*The love of Christ
has gathered us into one.*

*The love of Christ
has gathered us into one.*

*Let us exult,
and in Him be joyful.*

*Let us fear
and let us love the living God.*

*And from a sincere heart
let us love each other.*

*And from a sincere heart
let us love each other.*

*Where charity and love are,
there God is.*

Amen

A physical act of worship

This past year has been dominated not by footwashing but by hand washing. One of the ways we have cared for each other in a pandemic is to wash our own hands to in order to protect others. At the same time we have had to refrain from many of the ‘normal’ physical expressions of love – hugging, the touch of a shoulder etc.

How do you follow Christ’s commandment? Each time you wash your hands today, think about all the people you love, and perhaps the people you find it hard to love. Hold them in your heart and bring them before God.

Good Friday

Bible Reading

³³ Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴ Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" ³⁵ 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?" ³⁶ 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." ³⁷ 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." ³⁸ Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" - John 19:33-38

Reflection

Pilate asks a good question. I don't know the answer of course, but Jesus says he came to testify to the truth at a time when he knows he is about to be condemned to die as a criminal. Truth then here is bound up in the divine being in the depths of human suffering, in love going to die, in the world putting God on trial and crucifying him. The truth is in God abandoning God on the cross, and two secret disciples carrying his body to the tomb. The truth is in paradox that we cannot hope to understand, but that is central to everything. It is more than we can understand, but we can be a part of it, we can follow Christ's commandment of love, even if where he is going we cannot go.

Music suggestion – click [here](#) to listen

Tenebrae Responsories, Good Friday: Second Nocturn: II. Tenebrae factae sunt - Et inclinato capite – Exclamans

A physical act of worship

Good Friday is a hard day. We must balance the events of that first Good Friday - apparently hopeless, full of death and grief and sorrow, with the knowledge that we have of what is to come – Easter Sunday, with resurrection and hope and new life.

Try to take time today to stay with the sorrow, the sadness, the reality of a Saviour on the cross. Acknowledge in silence or with words or music, your own sorrow or pain. Remember a God who can be found even in the depths of pain and death.

Music on Good Friday can be helpful for expressing the abundance of emotion which is often hard to express. I have suggested this section of Victoria's Tenebrae Responsories, but do listen to the whole thing if you want to! I often find that music can express what words can't, often in the painful, scrunchy beauty of the harmony.



Odilon Redon (French, 1840–1916), Christ