

Waiting at the Tomb

A Meditative Morning Prayer Service

For Holy Saturday



Holy Saturday is one of the most profound moments in the Christian calendar. Christ has died. He lies motionless in the tomb. The project seems to be at an end. All hope is gone. But... This meditative service was put his together some years ago. It enters into the gap, between death and resurrection. A gap all of us are destined to enter at some point. What happens next. No, wait a moment, let's not rush. Let's stay in this gap and engage with the struggle of hope against the might of death and eternal oblivion. Poems are totally the right medium for such moments as this. They cut right through the anxiety. They give voice to what we never dare to hope for. And then comes the Resurrection. Which is why I make no apology for the premature introduction of Alleluia in the final piece of music.

If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, ev'n the spirit of truth. - Thomas Tallis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqt005j1dBO>

Opening Responses

A. We are here, God
we have felt your touch in the
sunlight seen your power in
the salt waves. We have
wondered at your mystery in
the stars and we marvel that
the maker of the universe
knows us by name. We are
here God: **WE ARE HERE TO
PRAISE AND WORSHIP YOU.**

B. We are here, Jesus
we know that you came to
find us,
we have listened to your
words
and smiled at your stories.

We have felt the warmth of
your love, and we thank you
that you have called us your
friends. We are here Jesus:
**WE ARE HERE TO PRAISE AND
WORSHIP YOU.**

C. We are here, Holy Spirit
we are grateful for your
presence
grateful for the way you bring
us close -for the way you
comfort us and challenge us
and keep us right. We are here
Holy Spirit: **WE ARE HERE TO
PRAISE AND WORSHIP YOU.**

Reading - *Psalms 139 : 7-10*

Where shall we go to escape your spirit
where shall we flee from your presence?
If we scale the heavens you are there,
if we lie flat in Sheol you are there,
if we speed away on the wings of the dawn,
if we dwell beyond the ocean
even there your hand guides us,
your right hand holds us fast.

Poem: *Song between the Soul and the Beloved* - John of the Cross. This Youtube piece is not the same poem but the message is similar and the music reflective: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apkmC5Pit2E>

Where are you hiding?
Where have you gone?
O Lord of my being,
You left me alone.

Like a stag in the forest
You charged me and fled.
You vanished. I followed,
Lamenting my loss.

Shepherds afar off
Go to the hills,
Go to the sheepfolds
And look for him there.

And if you should see him
Who captured my heart,
Tell him I sicken
And die for Him now.

I will look for my loved one,
The source of my pain,
On the heights of the mountains
And down on the shore.

I will not tarry
To pick the wild flowers,
Or fear the wild beasts
That menace my way.

I will not be turned back
By force of armed might,
Nor stopped by the frontiers
Of nations at war.

Reading - Frank Topping

They could not see, nor understand as they laid his body in the tomb, that death had been defeated. They could not comprehend that the Son of Man could not be sealed with a stone. Buried beneath a mountain and guarded with armies, his life would have burst it asunder and scattered legions. But that is not the way of the Son of God. In silence, he turned the world upside down, and left the tomb, not shattered, but tidy, like a thoughtful guest leaving early.

Song - *All that is Hidden* - Bernadette Farrell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMRccIF9MdI>

1. If you would follow me,
follow where life will lead;
Do not look for me
among the dead,
for I am hidden in pain,
Risen in love;
there is no harvest
without sowing of grain.

*All that is hidden
will be made clear,
all that is dark now
will be revealed.
What you have heard in the
dark
proclaim in the light;
what you hear in whispers
proclaim from the housetops.*

2. If you would honour me,
honour the least of these;
you will not find me
dressed in finery.

My word cries out to be
heard;
breaks through the world:
my word is on your lips
and lives in your heart.

3. If you would speak of me,
live all your life in me;
my ways are not the ways
that you would choose;
my thoughts are far beyond
yours,
as heaven from earth:
if you believe in me
my voice will be heard.

4. If you would rise with me,
rise through your destiny;
do not refuse the death
which brings you life.
For as the grain in the earth
must die for rebirth,
so I have planted your life
deep within mine.

Poem: *The Habit of Perfection* - G.M. Hopkins

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJdfhXR_TD4&list=TLPQMDIwNDIwMjCAVuLnyVBYhA&index=5

Elected Silence, sing to me
And beat upon my whorled ear,
Pipe me to pastures still and be
The music that I care to hear.

Shape nothing, lips; be lovely-dumb:
It is the shut, the curfew sent
From there where all surrenders come
Which only makes you eloquent.

Be shelled, eyes, with double dark
And find the uncreated light:
This ruck and reel which you remark
Coils, keeps, and teases simple sight.

Palate, the hutch of tasty lust,
Desire not to be rinsed with wine:
The can must be so sweet, the crust
So fresh that come in fasts divine!

Nostrils, your careless breath that spend
Upon the stir and keep of pride,
What relish shall the censers send
Along the sanctuary side!

O feel-of-primrose hands, O feet
That want the yield of plushy sward,
But you shall walk the golden street
And you unhouse and house the Lord.

And, Poverty, be thou the bride
And now the marriage feast begun,
And lily-coloured clothes provide
Your spouse not laboured-at nor spun.

Reading - John 14: 1-3: Jesus said: Do not let your hearts be troubled. You trust in God, trust also in me. In God's house there are many places to live - if it were otherwise I would have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you to myself, so that you may be with me, where I am.

Music - Ave verum corpus - William Byrd

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2ckGcpx6xI>

Ave verum corpus, natum de Maria Virgine, vere passum, immolatum in cruce pro homine: Cujus latus perforatum, Unda fluxit sanguine. Esto nobis praegustatum in mortis examine: O Dulcis, O pie, O Jesu fili Mariae, miserere mei. Amen.

Hail true body, born of the Virgin Mary. Truly suffering, was sacrificed on the cross for all, from whose pierced side flowed blood, be for us a foretaste in the final judgment. O sweet, O merciful, O Jesus, Son of Mary, Have mercy on me. Amen.

Reflection - Dandelion Clock

A visual with music to watch as you read this poem

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XhpZ_0H0FA

Hope is a dark elusive child
curled in the womb
cradled in our arms.
It can be lost,
disappear,
blown on the wind like a
dandelion clock.

Its going,
its ebbing away
leaves us
grieving,
empty,
hopeless.

'But' is a hopeful word.



But even as the gossamer
powder puff
disintegrates,
the seeds are carried
to cling to distant crevices.
As it recedes
it reseeds
to grow again.

God, giver of peace,
grow hope within and around
us.

God of steadfast love,
never leave us hopeless.

Music - *Everyday God* - Bernadette Farrell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spyIJYR8dA>

Earth's creator,
Everyday God.

Loving Maker,
O Jesus.

You who shaped us,
O Spirit.

Recreate us,
Come, be with us

In your presence,
We are gathered,
You have called us,
To restore us,

Life of all lives,
Love of all loves,
Hope of all hopes,
Light of all lights,

In our resting...
In our rising...
In our hoping...
In our waiting...

In our dreaming...
In our daring...
In our searching...
In our sharing...

God of laughter...
God of sorrow...
Home and shelter...
Strong and patient...

Way of freedom...
Star of morning...
Timeless healer...
Flame eternal...

Word of gladness...
Word of mercy...
Word of friendship...
Word of challenge...

Gentle father...
Faithful brother...
Tender sister...
Loving mother...

Our beginning...
Our unfolding...
Our enduring...
Journey's ending...

Alleluia...
Now and always...
Alleluia...
Through all ages...

Closing Responses (it's good to recite these over the instrumental at the conclusion of Everyday God)

The Lord says: When the time comes, I will answer the prayers of my people. I will betroth you to myself forever.

WITH INTEGRITY AND JUSTICE, TENDERNESS AND LOVE.

I will betroth you to myself with faithfulness:

AND WE WILL COME TO KNOW YOU.

I will say you are my people:

AND WE WILL ANSWER: YOU ARE OUR GOD

For once you were outside the mercy

BUT NOW WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN MERCY. THIS IS OUR HOPE,

OUR LIVING HOPE; WE SHALL BE GLAD. AMEN. AMEN





Some traditions, especially the Eastern Churches, consider on this day the belief that Christ descended into the depths of the underworld to call the righteous dead into the joy that comes from his risen glory. Icons depict this scene with Old Testament figures being summoned into the light.

Think on the following lines of scripture:

...the gospel proclaimed even to the dead | Peter 4: 6

...he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison

1 Peter 3: 9

...he first descended to the lower parts of the earth Ephesians 4:9

O Christ, you slept a life-giving sleep in the grave,
And you awakened humankind from the heavy sleep of sin.

O Lord my God, I sing unto you a burial song and a funeral chant,
Who by your burial have opened for me a door to life,
And by your death have brought an end to death and hell.

Today Hades tearfully sighs:

“Would that I had not received him who was born of Mary,
For he came to me and destroyed my power;
He broke my bronze gates,
And, being God,
Delivered the souls I had been holding captive”.

O Lord, glory to your Cross and to your Holy Resurrection!