

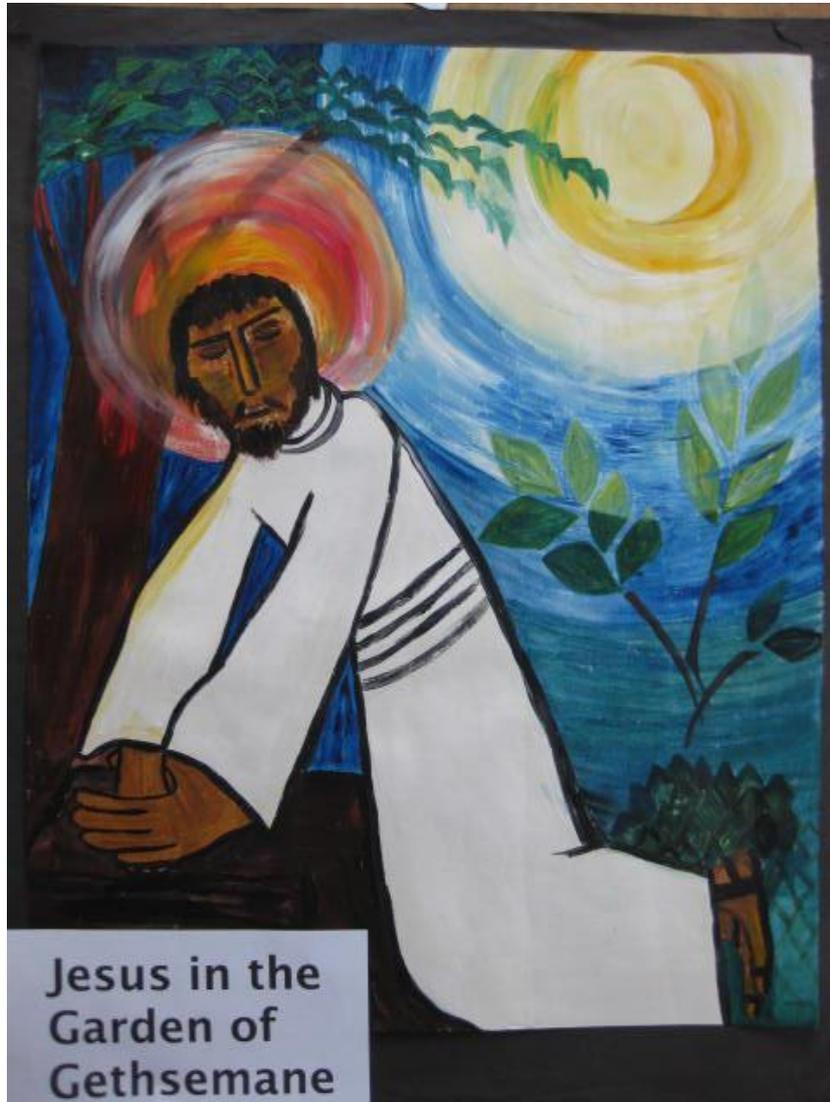
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**Readings, Meditations and Prayers**  
**on**  
**6 Stations of the Cross**

# Lent Meditation

Six points in Christ's journey through his passion to stop and reflect.

## The Agony in the Garden



Jesus in the  
Garden of  
Gethsemane

### **Scripture reading:**

Then Jesus came with them to a small estate called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, + "Stay here while I go over there to pray." C. He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. And sadness came over him, and great distress. Then he said to them, + "My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and keep awake with me." C. And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed. + "My Father, if it is possible let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it." C. He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, + "So you had not the strength to keep awake with me one hour? You should be awake, and praying not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

C. Again, a second time, he went away and prayed: + "My father, if this cup cannot pass by without my drinking it, your will be done!" C. And he came again back and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy. Leaving them there, he went away again and prayed for the third time, repeating the same words. Then he came back to the disciples and said to them, + "You can sleep on now and take your rest. Now the hour has come when the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us go! My betrayer is already close at hand."

## **Meditation**

You are a disciple of Jesus. You have joined the disciples in the garden. It is late, and you have just had a good meal with several cups of wine. What is it like - how do you feel?

You are a disciple of Jesus. There is Mass in the church in a few minutes which you should attend with others. It is early, and you had a good night with friends last night with several glasses of wine. What is it like – how do you feel?

Jesus counts on us, too – He counts on us to watch and pray with him, and with his friends, our neighbours. We often find that we sleep, too. Life is busy and it is difficult to be there for others as we would like. We often feel let down, maybe even betrayed, and we let down our friends and neighbours – sometimes we can't help it but we still feel bad. We can only do our best.

## **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, as the disciples slept in the garden of your greatest agony, ignoring your deepest needs, so I am often blind to the needs of those who suffer today. With tricks of mind and heart I can so easily rationalise my laziness and lack of care, sleeping my life away with temporary distractions and petty concerns.

My blindness pushes the needs of others to the bottom of my priority list, while my own comfort rests securely at the top of my concerns. Wake me, Lord Jesus, from my drowsiness so that I may hear you cry out with pain in the voices of my suffering brothers and sisters.

Help me overcome my fear of what others may think and say of me if I serve as you served, bless as you blessed, and love those most in need, as you so compassionately continue to love me. Amen.

## The Denial of Peter



### **Scripture**

While Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, a servant-girl came up to him and said, "You too were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it in front of them all, saying "I do not know what you are talking about." When he went out to the gateway another servant-girl saw him and said to the people there, "This man was with Jesus the Nazarene." And again, with an oath, he denied it, "I do not know the man." A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "You are one of them for sure! Why, your accent gives you away." Then he started calling down curses on himself and swearing, "I do not know the man." At that moment the cock crew, and Peter remembered what Jesus had said, "Before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

### **Reading**

## **Meditation**

Today there was a knock at the door and when I opened it there stood a young man and a young woman who smiled and asked me if I believed in Jesus and whether I knew what time of the year it was. I hardly answered them. I growled something and took their leaflet in order to get rid of them as quickly as possible.

Why? Why?

I didn't want to get involved in a discussion about Jesus. I didn't want to explain. I didn't want my beliefs and faith challenged. I was afraid.

Yet I admire them. They had the courage to go out and acknowledge their faith.

But me? When I was asked, like Peter before me, if I knew Jesus, did I say "YES"?

I have to admit I didn't.

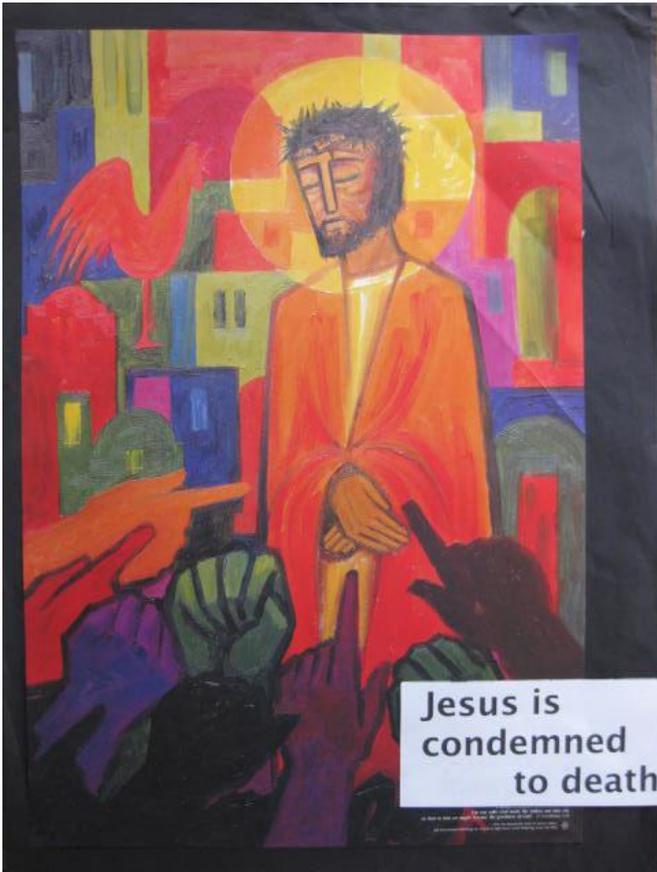
## **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, you knew Peter. You knew his strengths – which is why you chose him as leader – but you also knew his weaknesses. You knew his love and his enthusiasm and you valued him for it as a friend.

You know my weaknesses too, but you also know my love and my enthusiasm even in the midst of my busy life.

When we are afraid to acknowledge you or speak out when we should, send us your Spirit so that the next time, like Peter at Pentecost, we will show those around us just how greatly we value your friendship.

## Jesus is Condemned



### Scripture Reading:

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus, however false, on which they might pass the death-sentence. But they could not find any, though several lying witnesses came forward. Eventually two stepped forward and made a statement, "This man said, 'I have power to destroy the Temple of God and in three days build it up.'" The high priest then stood up and said to him, "Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence these men are bringing against you?" But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said to him, "I put you on oath by the living God to tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus answered, "The words are your own. Moreover, I tell you that from this time onward you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." At this, the

high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has blasphemed. What need of witnesses have we now? There! You have just heard the blasphemy. What is your opinion?" They answered, "He deserves to die." Then they spat in his face and hit him with their fists; others said as they struck him, "Play the prophet, Christ! Who hit you then?" When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people met in council to bring about the death of Jesus. They had him bound, and led him away to hand him over to Pilate, the governor.

Jesus, then, was brought before the governor, and the governor put to him this question, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "It is you who say it." But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to answer at all. Pilate said then to him, "Do you not hear how many charges they have brought against you?" But to the governor's complete amazement, he offered no reply to any of the charge.

At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose. Now there was at that time a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pilate said to them, "Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over.

Now as he was seated in the chair of judgement, his wife sent him a message, "Have nothing to do with that man; I have been upset all day by a dream I had about him."

The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. So, when the governor spoke and asked them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" They said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "What am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" "Why? What harm has he done?" Pilate asked. But they shouted all the louder, "Let him be crucified!" Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, "I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern." And the people, to a man, shouted back, "His blood be on us and on our children!" Then he released Barabbas for them. He ordered Jesus to be first scourged and then handed over to be crucified.

## **Meditation**

This passage could have come straight out of one of our national newspapers. What a familiar story! Politicians taking the easy way out and doing what the 'Party' wants. Vested interests cooking up the evidence in order to achieve their ends no matter what the cost.

We despise it, yet we are as complicit as the mob in front of Pilate – Germany in the 1930's, Bhopal, Iraq, Croatia, The Congo, Libya, abortion, bankers' bonuses – and the list goes on.

We and the politicians wash our hands of the wrongs we see. We don't have the time, we don't have the information, we don't have the influence.

We don't.

Where would WE be in Jerusalem when Jesus was being tried? In the mob? With the Disciples? At home, keeping our heads down? Doing what we always do because we don't care, it doesn't affect us, it's not our business, we're not interested.

Where are we now?

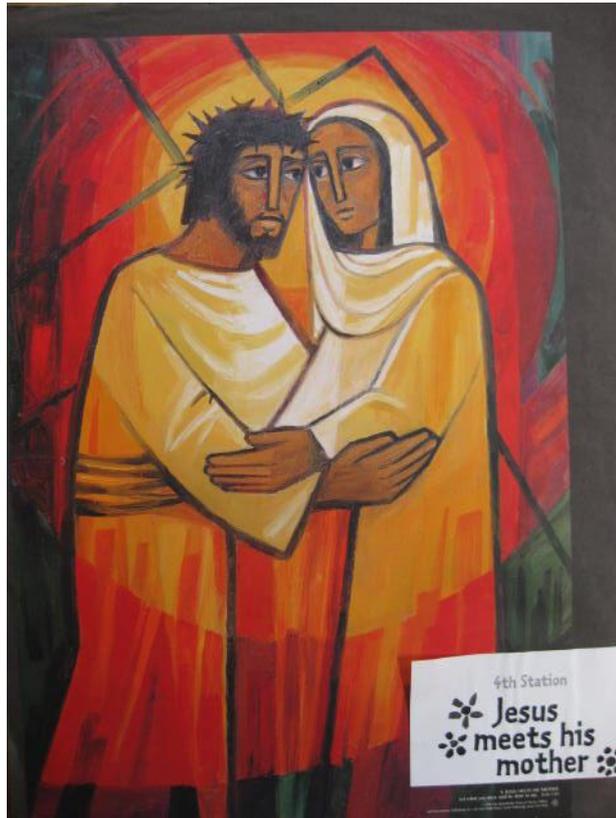
Where are we with today's issues? What will we say when Christ asks us what we did when he was aborted for being inconvenient, or about finding him a home when he was a refugee, finding him shelter when he slept on the streets, demanding justice when he was ignored, passed over, beaten or killed for not being white, or what we did when his world was damaged by our profligate use of its resources? Did we get arrested in Trafalgar Square, did we march in London, did we write to our MP, did we walk instead of drive, did we turn the heating down a notch and put on a jumper? Did we?

## **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, I do care. I don't want to take the easy way out. I do want to be with your disciples, but I'm scared and I really am not sure what I should do.

Here I am Lord, afraid of the mob, afraid of being made fun of, but wanting to be with you. Help me to put your love above my vested interests. Help me to put your way above my way so that I have no need, like Pilate, to wash my hands of your death.

## Jesus meets his Mother



### **Scripture reading:**

A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. Jesus turned and said to them “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children.” ( Luke 23: 27-28)

Now there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (John 19, 25 to 27)

### **Meditation**

This meditation is taken from a passage written as if by one of the Jerusalem women: “When Jesus noticed me and the other neighbourhood women crying in helplessness, he paused in our direction to speak. He wept for others as he himself faced death. Jesus turned my grieving heart and confused mind from him to all the innocent of the land. His words gave me a way, a purpose, a love I could share.

It was not until days later, when I was preparing a meal, that the lesson Jesus taught me reminded me of a story from my childhood. It was the story of a man who was famous throughout the land for his writings. He had written scroll upon scroll of brilliant musings and had shared them throughout the kingdom with the less learned. When he died he was lifted up into the heavens of judgment, where he saw many people in a long line. They must be awaiting their last reward, he thought, so he went to take his place in line, carrying with him all the scrolls he had penned during his life. He was heavily weighted with his writings on philosophy and law, business and money-changing. As he took his

place in line, he noticed standing in front of him was a small and frail woman of many years. She looked poor and uneducated, so it surprised the scholar greatly to see that she, too, was carrying a scroll. Curiosity got the best of him so finally he asked the old woman, "Tell me, please, what kind of writing does your scroll contain?" With surprise in her eyes, the frail old woman looked at the heavily burdened man and said simply, "Why, this is the scroll upon which is written the names of all the children I have loved. I was informed that I had to bring it with me in order to pass through into eternity." The man then realized that he brought the wrong scrolls."

### ***Prayer***

Where there is pain, God is present.  
Where there is despair, hope is hidden.  
Where there is oppression, freedom will rise.  
Where there is hurt, healing waits,  
Where there is conflict, Peace shall again be born.  
Where there is death, new life can grow.  
If only we have eyes that can see in the dark  
Jesus, lighten our darkness.

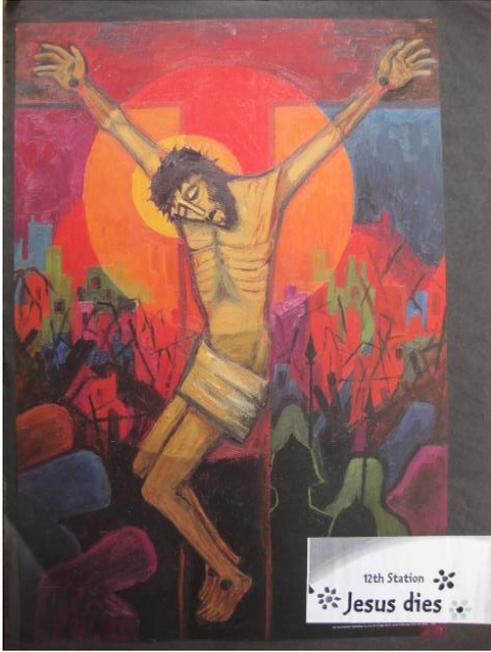
### **Prayer**

Mary, humble, wise, and sorrowful mother, you stood at the foot of your son's cross as he died an inhuman and ungodly death. You stood with courage and wisdom, seeing beyond your pain into the message of your son's life. Open my eyes, Mary, so that I too can see through the midst of my hurt into the possibilities of new meaning and hope. Your heart, Mary, was pierced with the sword of despair yet you trusted in God's purpose and will. Help me see the presence of God in my life when pain blinds me. Teach me to know in mind and heart that in every moment and experience, God is speaking to me of life's blessings.

Help me accept the death of Jesus, your son, as a sign of God's overwhelming and powerful love for me. And, Mary, most holy, give me the courage to let your son rise up in me as he as he rose again in your heart on that first Easter Day. Amen.

## Jesus Dies

### Scripture Reading:



From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" When some of those who stood there heard this, they said, "The man is calling on Elijah," and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he dipped in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink. The rest of them said, "Wait! See if Elijah will come to save him." But Jesus, again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

At that, the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks were split; the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy men rose from the dead, and these, after his resurrection, came

out of the tombs, entered the Holy City and appeared to a number of people. Meanwhile the centurion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and said, "In truth this was a son of God."

### Meditation

See.

He has taken his heavy heart,

And,

Slowly,

Laboriously,

Alone between heaven and earth,

In the awesome night,

With passionate love,

He has gathered his life,

He has gathered the sin of the world, And in a cry,

He has given *all*.

‘Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.’

Christ has just died for us.

## Prayer

Everything seems grey and sombre as when a fog blots out the sun and enshrouds the earth.

Everything is an effort, everything is difficult, and I am heavy - footed and slow.

Every morning I am overwhelmed at the thought of another day. I long for the end, I yearn for the oblivion of death.

I should like to leave,

run away,

flee,

anywhere, escape.

Escape what?

You, Lord, others, myself, I don't know,

But leave,

Flee.

I progress haltingly like a drunkard

From force of habit, unconsciously I go through the same motions each day, but I know that they are meaningless.

I walk, but I know that I get nowhere. I speak, and my words seem dreadfully empty, for they can reach only human ears and not the living souls who are far above.

Ideas themselves escape me, and I find it hard to think. I stammer, confused, blushing, And I feel ridiculous and abashed, for people will notice me. Lord, am I losing my mind? Or is all this what you want?

It wouldn't matter, except that I am alone.

I am alone.

You have taken me far, Lord; trusting, I followed you, and you walked at my side, And now, at night, in the middle of the desert, suddenly you have disappeared.

I call, and you do not answer.

I search, and I do not find you.

I have left everything, and now am left alone.

Your absence is my suffering.

Lord, it is dark.

Lord, are you here in my darkness?

Where are you, Lord?

Do you love me still? Or have I wearied you?

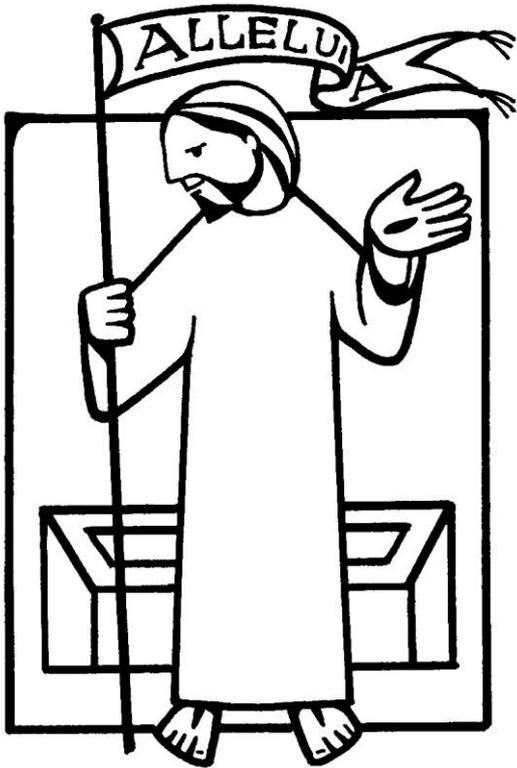
Lord, answer,

Answer!

It is dark.

## Resurrection

### Scripture Reading



Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. <sup>2</sup>So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

<sup>3</sup>So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. <sup>4</sup>Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup>He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. <sup>6</sup>Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, <sup>7</sup>as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. <sup>8</sup>Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. <sup>9</sup>(They still did not understand from

Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

<sup>10</sup>Then the disciples went back to their homes, <sup>11</sup>but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb <sup>12</sup>and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

<sup>13</sup>They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him". <sup>14</sup>At this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realise that it was Jesus.

<sup>15</sup>"Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

<sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, "Mary". She turned towards him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).

<sup>17</sup>Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

(Acts 10:39-43)

<sup>39</sup> "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, <sup>40</sup> but God raised him from the dead on the

third day and caused him to be seen. <sup>41</sup> He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. <sup>42</sup> He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. <sup>43</sup> All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

(1Corinthians 15:3-8)

For I delivered unto you first of all, which I also received: how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures: <sup>4</sup> And that he was buried: and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures: <sup>5</sup> And that he was seen by Cephas, and after that by the eleven. <sup>6</sup> Then was he seen by more than five hundred brethren at once: of whom many remain until this present, and some are fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> After that, he was seen by James: then by all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> And last of all, he was seen also by me, as by one born out of due time.

### **Meditation**

During the last week of Lent, we focus on the events leading up to Christ’s death on the Cross. Christ died as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins, and so it is right that we spend such time focusing on His Passion. However, we must not lose sight of what comes after. Christ’s Resurrection is just as fundamental to our faith as His death, for without the Resurrection, the story of Jesus’ life would be the story of the failure of one man to make any great difference. Without the Resurrection, Jesus is reduced to the role of a holy man who lived well, taught others and was executed, and Christianity would have been nothing more than a short-lived, small, Jewish sect. But Christ conquered death by His Resurrection, not just for Himself, but for all of us, and gave us the promise of everlasting life, having died for our sins so that we may be worthy of this gift of our own resurrection.

Now, we must be like Peter in the second reading above, and Paul in the third, and spread the Good News: Christ died for our sins, but He also rose again, and it is on that basis that our faith is formed.

Let us remember the joy of the women and the other disciples when they realized that the Lord had risen. This incredible event transformed their lives!

Let it transform ours with a deep joy!

## Prayer

*Hold me for a moment,  
caught into that space in time -  
when heaven burst with exultation  
as recognition changed our world.*

*And, hold me just a little longer,  
as awesome joy of such  
unprecedented force  
pours over me,  
rollercoasting my emotions.*

*And hold me, please,  
just a fraction more -  
so that I can hear again the voice that speaks  
and unbelief is broken.*

*For quite clearly  
I hear not "Mary" but another called.  
And my heart races with delight  
for the name you call is  
mine.*



