

The Island of Hawai'i Episcopal Congregations

Lent 2021

SOUNDS BEFORE THE CROSS

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Introduction

This booklet is designed to accompany you through Lent 2021. It offers you pictures, woodcut prints, reflecting different biblical themes appropriate for Lent. Along with each picture are suggestions as to how you may use them in praying. Six are offered here; that means one for each week of Lent.

To get the best from this Lent booklet you should read the bible passages that go with the pictures. Then, look closely at the pictures. You are being asked to hear the sounds which the bible passages speak about and which the pictures portray. An address in church, each week, will focus on each passage.

In your mind's eye, and using the imagination you have picture, from the bible, the original scene in whatever way you wish, think what it might all have looked like and hear what sounds there might have been.

This is imaginative praying. Take yourself to the scene and reflect upon it. But do not stay there longer than two minutes. Come back to where you are now and ask yourself what is new to you in the way you understand this passage.

At this you may rejoice at finding something new. That is good. If, however, it is disturbing don't hesitate to speak to someone about it – the rector maybe, or a friend perhaps. I too am always available if you wish.

†Robert Gillies
Ash Wednesday 2021

The veil was torn
Matthew 27.45-51a



The veil was torn

Take a few moments to look carefully at the picture opposite.
One principal theme can be seen in it:

The hand of God tearing the Temple Curtain in
Jerusalem from the top to the bottom.

Quietly gaze upon this picture and, in the visual prayer of your mind, hear the Temple Curtain rip and shred into pieces.

See, as a consequence, that any barrier between God and humanity is done away with.

By this means we are drawn into the closer presence of God.

Allow two minutes for this quiet, reflective and imaginative praying and end this 2021 Lent sequence with the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in Heaven,
Holy is your Name.
Your kingdom come
Your will be done,
on earth, as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not to the time of trial,
But deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
And the glory are yours,
Now and for ever. Amen.

THEMES FOR REFLECTION

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Splashing water: John the Baptist and Pontius Pilate

Matthew 3.13-17

Matthew 27.22-26



The earth cracked and the heavens opened

Matthew 27.51b-54



The earth cracked and the heavens opened

Take a few moments to look carefully at the picture opposite. Several themes are there in it:

- The earth, tortured in an earthquake, in one and the same move releases a tree growing skyward.
- Simultaneously it is also seen as a river of life flowing downward to the earth.
- The hands of God are shown at the height of this tree (and, equally, at the source of the river) releasing the dove of God's Holy Spirit.
- Light itself, together with piercing shards of light, penetrate earth's darkness from God's heaven.

You may well see more.

Quietly gaze upon this image and let your mind reflect on these contrasting, but complementary, themes:

- Tree and river
- Light and dark
- Hand of God, cruelty of humanity

Hear the dark sound of earthquake and as you do, see if you can bathe in the light of God's Holy Spirit.

Allow two minutes for this quiet, reflective and imaginative praying.

Splashing water: John the Baptist and Pontius Pilate

Take a few moments to look carefully at the picture opposite.

It reflects two main themes:

- John the Baptist baptising Jesus in preparation for what he was to do.
- Pontius Pilate seeking to wash away any personal guilt for Jesus' upcoming death.

Quietly think of what happened on each occasion.

The face of John the Baptist is on the left with Pontius Pilate to the right. You need to know this in order to identify who each is. Focus now upon their hands.

Hands are an important feature in all pictures in this Lent programme.

Quietly place yourself in either, or both, these settings and in your mind listen the sounds that might have accompanied these two men as they each did what they had to do with water, and with Jesus.

Allow two minutes for this quiet, reflective and imaginative praying.

Silent oil and jingling coins

Take a few moments to look carefully at the picture opposite.

It reflects two main themes:

- The silent oil being poured when Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus.
- The jingling coins when Judas Iscariot threw down the thirty pieces of silver previously offered him to betray Jesus.

Quietly think upon what happened on each occasion, and in a visual prayer in your mind's eye, put yourself in the same place where each of these two events took place.

As you do so, listen to the sounds of each:

- The silence of the pouring oil
- The crash, or clash, of the coins as Judas threw them down.

Allow two minutes for this quiet, reflective and imaginative praying.

The whip fell and the nails rang

Matthew 27.15-23,26 Mark 15.25-32



The whip fell and the nails rang

Take a few moments to look carefully at the picture opposite.

It reflects two main themes:

- The scourging of Jesus.
- The nailing of Jesus to the cross.

In the picture, opposite, both these are merged together.

There are, in fact, three sets of hands. Look at each:

- The hand with the hammer.
- The hand with the whip.
- The hand of Jesus, being impaled on the cross.

Despite the cruelty and drama of each of these actions, quietly try to think of what was happening and take your mind, in a visual prayer, behind the torturing and pain of each, and consider Mary, the mother of Our Lord, grieving behind her hands. These are not seen in the picture. You will have to imagine them in prayer.

Allow two minutes for this quiet, reflective and imaginative praying.

Silent oil and ingleing coins

Matthew 26. 14-16, 47-50; 27.1-5

Mark 14.3-9



The charcoal crackled and the cock crew

Take a few moments to look carefully at the picture opposite.

It reflects two main themes:

- Peter's furrowed brow in the guilt he feels at having denied Jesus.
- The cock crows before dawn and Peter knows he has done wrong.

Quietly think of the events that night in Jerusalem and picture each in your mind's eye.

Then, in a visual prayer within your mind, place yourself near that charcoal fire and listen to the sounds:

- Of Peter vociferously denying Jesus before those who recognised him as one of Jesus' followers

and

- Then hear the shrill cry of the cockerel that marked the moment when Peter realised he had done wrong.

Allow two minutes for this quiet, reflective and imaginative praying.

The charcoal crackled and the cock crew

Mark 14.66-72

