



*-Douglas Blanchard*

## **Holy Week Prayers**

### **Saturday Vespers**

*You are invited to pray these words following supper,  
or anytime in the evening before going to sleep.*

## Before beginning...

- ⊕ *If you're using the audio recording, feel free to stop and start it as necessary. If you're not using the recording, you are free to pray through the material as you wish.*
- ⊕ *If you're with a group, you may wish to have different people read different sections. Or you may have a leader read the light print, and have the group read together the text in bold print.*
- ⊕ *Where you see a + you are invited to make the sign of the cross.*



THE CALL TO PRAYER

Let the Name of the Lord be blessed, from this time forth for evermore. From the rising of the sun to its going down let the Name of the Lord be praised.

—Psalm 113:2-3

THE GREETING

**Let my cry come before you, O Lord; give me understanding according to your word. Let my supplication come before you; deliver me, according to your promise.**

—Psalm 119:169-170

SONG FOR THE DAY ~ *Help, O Lord*

Help, O Lord, no one is good anymore.  
Your faithful ones are fast disappearing.  
My neighbor lies, speaks with deceit in his eyes,  
With smiling lips but a heart that would hurt me.  
Help, O Lord. Help, O Lord.

They all say, “Who can stop us anyway?  
They’re our mouths—we can lie if we want to.  
Our kingdom has come, it’s our will that will be done.  
We’ll get ahead by any way we have to.  
Help, O Lord. Help, O Lord.

The Lord replies, “I’ve seen your violence and your lies;  
I’ve heard the cries and the groans of the helpless.  
My promises are true—I’ll do what they have begged me to—  
And I will rise, I will rise up and rescue.  
I am the Lord. I am the Lord.”

Though the wicked talk a mighty talk,  
And evil is praised throughout the land,  
The Lord will hear the cries of the weak.  
His promises are sure to stand.  
Protect the helpless! Save the oppressed!  
Preserve the faithful! Rescue the poor!  
Help, O Lord. Help, O Lord.

—*Ordinary Time*

**In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness. Incline your ear to me; make haste to deliver me. Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, for you are my crag and my stronghold; for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me. Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, for you are my tower of strength. Into your hands I commend my spirit, for you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.**

—Psalm 31:1-5

## PRAYER OF ORIENTATION

Here at the centre everything is still,  
Before the stir and movement of our grief  
That bears its pain with rhythm, ritual,  
Beautiful useless gestures of relief.  
So they anoint the skin that cannot feel  
And soothe his ruined flesh with tender care,  
Kissing the wounds they know they cannot heal,  
With incense scenting only empty air.  
He blesses every love that weeps and grieves,  
And makes our grief the pangs of a new birth.  
The love that's poured in silence at old graves,  
Renewing flowers, tending the bare earth,  
Is never lost. In him all love is found  
And sown with him, a seed in the rich ground.

—Malcolm Guite

## CONFESSION

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father: I have sinned against you, through my own fault, in thought, and word, and deed, in what I have done and in what I have left undone. For the sake of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive me all my offenses; and grant that I may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your Name. Amen. +**

### *Listening Silence*

*(Feel free to pause your playback device)*

Keep your eyes fixed on the Lord—our strength, our stronghold; in steadfast lovingkindness our merciful God comes to meet us.

—Psalm 59:9-10

**Lord, hear my prayer, and in your faithfulness heed my supplications; answer me in your righteousness.**

—Psalm 143:1

WORD OF GOD, WORD OF LIFE  
(read by Steve Ofstein)

Christ himself died once and for all for sins, the upright for the sake of the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison.

Since Jesus went through everything you're going through and suffered more, learn to think like him. Think of your sufferings as a weaning from that old sinful habit of always expecting to get your own way. Then you'll be able to live out your days free to pursue what God wants instead of being tyrannized by what you want.

You've already put in your time in that God-ignorant way of life, partying night after night, a drunken and profligate life. Now it's time to be done with it for good. Of course, your old friends don't understand why you no longer hurry off with them to join this flood which is rushing down to ruin, and then abuse you for it. But you don't have to give an account to them.

Listen to the Message. It was preached to those believers who are now dead, and yet even though they died (just as all people must), they will still get in on the *life* that God has given in Jesus.

Everything in the world is about to be wrapped up, so take nothing for granted. Stay wide-awake in prayer. Most of all, love each other as if your life depended on it. Love makes up for practically anything.

*-1 Peter 3:18-19, 4:1-4, 5-8*

**Lord, hear my prayer, and in your faithfulness heed my supplications; answer me in your righteousness.**

PRAYER FOR OTHERS

*Reflect on how you felt without your electronic devices. Did you feel disjointed? Disconnected? Anxious? Lost? Frustrated?*

*(Feel free to pause your playback device)*

*For Mary, Martha, James, John—just to name a few—that first Saturday was not just a day of grief; their lives were turned upside down by Christ's death. Today there are situations in which people are feeling anxious, lost, disconnected, frustrated, and helpless. Offer what comes to your heart and mind as a prayer to God.*

*(Feel free to pause your playback device)*

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous. May the Lord Almighty grant us and those we love a peaceful night and a perfect end; and all for your love's sake. Amen.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be 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. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.**

## THE CONCLUDING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

**Lord, it is evening after a long day. What has been done has been done; what has not been done has not been done; let it be.**

**The night is dark. It is for stillness. Let our fears of the darkness, of the world, and of our lives rest in You. Let us be still in your Presence.**

**The night is quiet. Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all who are dear to us, and all who have no peace.**

**The night heralds the dawn. Let us look expectantly to a new day, new joys, and new possibilities. Amen. +**

### *Listening Silence*

*(Feel free to pause your playback device)*

## THE FINAL THANKSGIVING

**Lord, you now have set your servant free to go in peace as you have promised; for these eyes of mine have seen the Saviour, whom you have prepared for all the world to see: a Light to enlighten the nations, and the glory of your people Israel. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.**

