

Holy Saturday Prayer Vigil

(Prayer Vigil begins at 8:00 p.m. on Good Friday and goes until 8:00 a.m. Easter Sunday morning)

INDIVIDUAL PRAYER AT HOME OR LOCATION OF YOUR CHOICE

VIGIL INTENT & ORDER: *What does your heart do, where does your heart go when you are waiting in the dark of night – in what appears to be utter hopelessness or confusion? How do we pray through our dark nights of body, soul, and spirit to a new day of hope and joy?*

From 1 Peter 4:1-3; 7-8: Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry... For the end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

LITANY OF PREPARATION

Leader: In the midst of life we are in death. From whom can we seek help? From you alone, O Lord, who by our sins are justly angered, and yet full of mercy.

People: *Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Merciful Savior, we thank you that by the death of your Son we are not delivered into the bitterness of eternal death.*

From Psalm 130 & 31:

Reader 1: Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD! O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy. If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

People: *But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. Therefore I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning.*

Reader 1: O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and plentiful redemption.

People: *And he will redeem Israel for all his iniquities.*

CALL TO PRAYER

Dear friends in Christ: On this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus passed over from death to life, the Church invites her members, dispersed throughout the world, to gather in vigil and prayer. For this is the Passover of the Lord, in which, through the ordinances of prayer and the Word, we share in Christ's victory over death.

On this night we remember that God delivered our ancestors in the faith, the children of Israel, out of slavery, poverty and suffering in Egypt, and led them through the Red Sea on dry land.

On this night we are reminded that all who believe in Christ are delivered from the gloom, condemnation and bondage of sin, and are restored to grace and holiness of life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Because: this is the night when Christ broke the bonds of death and hell, and rose victorious from the grave.

Let us pray: O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with Him the coming of the new dawn, and rise with Him to newness of life; who now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Leader: Lord, you know the secrets of our hearts; shut not your ears to our prayers, by virtue of our Savior's death; but spare us, O Lord, in your mercy.

People: *Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and... (as before)*

Leader: O worthy and eternal Judge, do not let the pains of death turn us away from you at our last hour.

Everyone: *Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and... (as before)*

Reader 2: In you, O LORD, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me! Incline your ear to me... for you are my refuge. Into your hands I commit my spirit.

People: *But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, "You are my God." My times are in your hand; rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors! Make your face shine on your servant; save me in your steadfast love! O LORD, let me not be put to shame, for I call upon you.*

Reader 2: Love the LORD, all you his saints! The LORD preserves the faithful but abundantly repays the one who acts in pride.

Everyone: *Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the LORD!*

OUR PRAYERS

Direction: We will pray in 3 main sets –

(1) *for the World in Confusion & Hopelessness*; (2) *for the Church of our Lord in Waiting*; (3) *for Our Own Hearts*.

In each of the prayer sets we will pray corporately and then in silence, during which we will be accompanied by an instrumental meditation. Please join the readers at the close of each set by praying together: “O Lord, hear our prayer.”

(Leader) For the World in Confusion & Hopelessness

Gracious Father, our world is indeed broken and foul. Have mercy because of your Son Jesus. All around us is confusion, darkness, and hopelessness. Show grace because of your Son Jesus. There is poverty, rage, pain, suffering, war, injustice, lameness and blindness in both spirit and of the body. Bring healing because of your Son Jesus.

You're invited to verbalize prayers (even pray by name) for our needy, sin-torn world. Allow the following to aid you:

- the sick, the wounded, and the afflicted in mind or body...
- the hungry and the homeless, the destitute and the oppressed...
- those in loneliness, fear, and anguish...
- victims of abuse, trafficking, and exploitation...
- those who face temptation, doubt, and despair...
- the sorrowful and bereaved...
- those who have not yet believed in Christ...
- protection from terrorism at home or abroad...
- men and women in uniform seeking to be peace-keepers...
- prisoners and captives, and those in mortal danger...

Silent Prayer

Together: *O Lord, hear our prayer*

(Reader 1) For the Church of Our Lord in Waiting

Gracious Father, watch over the Bride of Christ, the church as she walks through this world of sin and suffering. Have mercy because of her groom Jesus. Make your church the beacon of hope and truth in a world torn by sin and darkness. Show grace because of the churches' groom Jesus. There is poverty, rage, pain, suffering, war, injustice, lameness and blindness all around your church and even within her. Bring healing because of her groom Jesus.

You're invited to verbalize prayers for the needs of the church-at-large and even this and other local bodies. Allow the following to aid you:

- for her purity and peace
- for her love, one person for another, in this and every congregation
- for her faithful proclamation of the Gospel here and around the world
- for her leaders, that they may shepherd the people out of sincere love for the Lord and his truth
- for her faithfulness and preparation in waiting for her bridegroom to return
- for her mission to the ends of the earth
- for all her people, for those presently living at a distance from the Church, and for those yet to believe

Silent Prayer

Together: *O Lord, hear our prayer*

(Reader 2) For Our Own Hearts

Gracious Father, we are weary in this world as we wait for you. In our weariness and sinfulness, we turn to many other loves and things that will never satisfy. Have mercy because of your Son Jesus. We are confused and feel dark and hopeless. Show grace because of your Son Jesus. There is poverty of soul in us. There is rage in us. There is pain and suffering in us. There is war within us – in our relationships. There is injustice in us. There is blindness and lameness in us. Bring healing to us because of your Son Jesus.

Silent Prayer

Together: *O Lord, hear our prayer*

RECORD OF GOD'S REDEMPTION PROMISED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Ezekiel 36:24-28; 37:11-14

(Leader)

I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.

(Reader 1)

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

(Reader 2)

Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.' ...Thus says the LORD GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel.

ALL:

And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.

RECORD OF CHRIST'S ENTOMBMENT

Luke 23:50-56

(Leader)

Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to their decision and actions; and he was looking for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid. It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning. The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments.

On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

CLOSING PRAYER - "Love Lusters at Calvary"

O Lord, as we close this Prayer Vigil, fill us with anticipation for Christ's resurrection. Remind us, each one, why he died, why he was buried, and what awaits each person who hopes in him alone:

Everyone:

*Christ was all anguish that I might be all joy,
cast off that I might be brought in,
trodden down as an enemy that I might be
welcomed as a friend,
surrendered to hell's worst that I might
attain heaven's best,
stripped that I might be clothed,
wounded that I might be healed,
athirst that I might drink,
tormented that I might be comforted.
made a shame that I might inherit glory,
entered darkness that I might have eternal light:*

*My Savior wept that all tears might be wiped from my eyes,
groaned that I might have endless song,
endured all pain that I might have unfading health,
bore a thornèd crown that I might have a glory-diadem,
bowed his head that I might uplift mine,
experienced reproach that I might receive welcome,
closed his eyes in death that I might gaze on
unclouded brightness,
expired that I might forever live.*

(Leader): Lord, we thank you this night for Jesus' redeeming agony. Prepare us now for his dawn.
In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SILENT REFLECTION – "*Here is Love*"

Here is love vast as the ocean, loving kindness as the flood; when the Prince of life, our ransom,
shed for us his precious blood. Who his love will not remember? Who can cease to sing his praise?
He will never be forgotten throughout heav'n's eternal days.

On the mount of crucifixion, fountains opened deep and wide; through the floodgates of God's mercy,
flowed a vast and gracious tide. Grace and love like mighty rivers poured incessant from above.
Heaven's peace and perfect justice kissed a guilty world in love.

*Please conclude in silence when you are ready;
and continue in prayerful watch and vigil
until the break of HIS morning light.*