

**All the following prayers are taken from
the URC Prayer Handbook 2020**

A PRAYER FOR PALM SUNDAY:

(Matthew 21:1-11)

What, on a donkey

As we imagine how
our Saviour and Lord sets out
to change the world forever,
riding a humble beast of burden,
what deepest truth do we find
contained within this comic paradox?

We can delight in how you show
true value and importance are not built
upon impressions of grandeur, but
are demonstrated best through humility,
integrity and self-giving love.

So, today, we bless all whose
leadership is quietly spoken and
underpinned by their lived-out example;
we bless all whose authority is achieved
through honesty and selfless commitment;
we bless all whose leadership echoes
the Godly contradictions of
the donkey-riding Saviour.

Bless all who lead us in the way of the Lord:
Hosanna in the highest!

*Ian Fosten (Minister of Wrentham Chapel Suffolk & Director
of the Seagull Community Theatre in Lowestoft)*

A PRAYER FOR MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK:

(John 12:1-11)

I can't share my table with you

I can't share my table with you ...
but I can share a table with people of my time;
I can be like Mary, attentive to their needs
both spoken and unspoken.
I can be like Lazarus
a living testimony of what you have done for me,
impacting people in ways I may not even know.

My words, my actions, my attitudes,
can be like sweet perfume
filling the air
and reaching places I may never imagine.

Who I am,
how I am,
may sometimes be misunderstood
or ill-received;
I'm happy to share that in common with you.

I can't share my table with you, Lamb of God,
but I can walk in company with you.

*Karen Campbell (A Church-Related Community Worker
serving an ecumenical group of churches in Luton, Beds.)*

A PRAYER FOR TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK:

(John 12:20-36)

Looking closely at Jesus

I look at you, Jesus,
and what do I see?

I've learned some familiar characteristics;
Teacher, Leader,
Healer, Saviour –
God.

But today, as I've read this story
once again, I look at you, Jesus
and beyond the Gospel writer's
confident claims, I see your eyes –
eyes that are only partly focussed on
the present, because the hard road ahead
pulls insistently on your gaze.

I see a face lined prematurely with
the demands of love, truth and destiny.
I see hands, surprisingly delicate,
soft and sensitive enough
to hold without hurting,
and administer a gentle, healing touch.

I see you, Jesus, and for a while
I'd like, simply, to stay and
take in what I see –
and then I'll follow, as best I can,
the road you trod, the way you set for me.

Ian Fosten

A PRAYER FOR WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK:

(Hebrews 12:1-3)

Seeing, understanding, faith ...

Lord Jesus,
we will fix our eyes on you ...

and we will see you
in the soldier who leaves the
safety of the trench to rescue
a comrade fallen in battle ...

We will see you
in the reckless intervention of one
who goes to the assistance of someone
being picked on or abused ...

we will see you and hear you
in the whistle-blower who risks all
in order to expose wrongdoing
and cover-up ...

and we will see you in
our heart's desire to be the
honest, brave, Godly person
we aspire to be.

Yes, we will fix our eyes on you,
let you take our hand and lead us
where we need to be, but
cannot go alone.

Ian Fosten

TWO PRAYERS FOR MAUNDY THURSDAY

(Exodus 12:1-14 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

Unholy meals!

We eat our bellies full
whilst our neighbour faints from hunger.

Hot meals, on demand
whilst some rely on charity.

Tonnes of food lost as waste
whilst children starve to death.

Untainted water from the supermarket
whilst millions yearn for water flowing from a tap.

We pile our trolleys and our baskets
avoiding the sleeping bags lying in the doorways.

We say our grace.
We give our thanks.

You gave your body.
You shed your blood.

Forgive us our unholy meals.

Karen Campbell

(John 13:1-17)

Following Peter's example

Lord,
will I let you wash my feet?

Will I let you wet and soften
all that is ingrained, intransigent
and hard to shift?

Will I let you clean each crease,
each wrinkle, each stain,
each mark I cannot quite erase?

Lord, don't stop at
freshening up my feet;
clean, deeply, every part –
my thoughts, my choices
and, especially,
my heart.

Ian Fosten

TWO PRAYERS FOR GOOD FRIDAY

(John 18:1-19 and 42)

As if I was there

Let me absorb the unfolding scene ...
see and hear as if I was there
in the flesh –
sensitised and raw;

the Friend, betrayed;
the Peacemaker arrested;
the Faithful denied;
the Innocent accused;
the Blameless condemned;
the Gentle abused;
the Healer assaulted;
the Liberator nailed.

Life put to death.

The Lamb sacrificed.

For me.
Was all of this really for me?

Let me see and hear
and feel again,
and offer my heart in return.

Karen Campbell

(Isaiah 52:13-15 Isaiah 53 verse 12)

Gruesome and beauty collide

Good Friday God,

This day acts like a magnet
drawing to its dark core
all that is too hard, too grisly,
too shocking to look at;
all that is just too painful to hear;
all that overwhelms the heart
in sadness or intensity or depth of need;
all from which, it seems, our only choice
must be to turn away.

And yet, when all is lost and
hope has been obliterated,
when there is nothing left to hold on to,
there remains –
hope beyond our hoping
life beyond our imagining,
joy confounding every expectation.

Honour, glory and praise
be to you,
crucified Lord Jesus.

Ian Fosten

TWO PRAYERS FOR HOLY SATURDAY

(Job 14:1-14 and 1 Peter 4:1-8)

Let me not be smug!

You know, Lord,
sometimes when I read your word
there is a danger that I might become
a little smug; a bit self-righteous,
knowing that the things I see written
do not apply to me.

I have never engaged in debauchery
or orgies, or carousing –
though I'm not sure what that means!
I am not given to drunkenness,
nor chasing after worldly pleasures.
Reckless wild living? That doesn't describe
the way I live my life, or ever have.

And yet, keep me from complacency;
because I know I am not perfect.
I am only human – flesh and blood;
the way you made me.

I have chosen paths I shouldn't have.
Sometimes I still do.
So open my ears to receive your message –
even when the specific words
do not seem to apply to me.

They *are* for me –
because I am only human and I am not perfect.

Karen Campbell

(John 19:38-42)

A meditation for Easter Saturday

Dressing the darkness

After the agony, the emptying and
the yielding up, darkness falls –
a final curtain
except, for Joseph and Nicodemus,
the darkness is not an ending
but an opportunity.

*(without hurrying, picture the anxious request to Pilate;
imagine the weight of the embalming spices;
understand how the cloak of darkness,
far from impeding their activity, provides safe cover for the
lifting, the arranging, the laying to rest, the offering of this last
gift of dignity to him who was wholly good
and wholly God.)*

Loving God, I offer to you all
my good intentions, best efforts,
earnest hopes and acts of love
which didn't seem to make much of a difference.

I place them with the spices, the linen and the tears
that tomorrow, or in your good time,
I may share your resurrection joy.

Ian Fosten

TWO PRAYERS FOR EASTER DAY

(John 20:1-18)

A journey, not a race

It is not a race,
though we sometimes behave as if it is.

You make yourself known in different ways,
to different people, at different times.

Some have a confidence, a certainty,
which prompts them to jump straight in
and race to you, never really looking back.

Bless them for their faith.

Some run ahead
with eagerness and passion
but hesitate
when the realities of life loom real and large.

Bless them for their faith.

Some are overwhelmed –
wanting, needing and yearning for you –
not sure what to think,
how to make sense,
what to dare believe.

Bless them for their faith.

Whatever our path or experience
You call us all to you
And give each a message
To share with different people
In different ways.

It is a journey, not a race
And we bless you for the gift of faith.

Karen Campbell

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([Jeremiah 31:1-6](#)
[Psalm 118:1-2 and 14-24](#)
[Colossians 3:1-4](#))

For the evening of Easter day

Feels like home to me ...

The echoes of our morning hallelujahs
have faded with the day
and in the thoughtful calm of evening
His story mingles with our own.

Since not even death could put his living
beyond the presence of the Father's love,
by means we cannot hope to understand,
tonight we rest –
in knowing that wherever we are,
whatever comes our way
we are marvellously at home –
known,
held,
loved,
this day and for all eternity.

Ian Fosten