

Praying Together

Lent 2017



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

Guidance

- This material is designed for use either individually at home or in a small group. Alternatively it can be used for a short time of prayer together in church each day during Lent.
- Read the short passage of Scripture and then leave a period of at least a few minutes of silent reflection. After each of the following sections (REFLECT, PRAY, ACT) also leave a short time of silence.
- The overall time for this could be from five or ten minutes to as much as half an hour.
- You may like to light a candle for the duration of the prayer time as a focus for your attention and your praying.
- Some of the actions are very practical whereas others are primarily reflective. They will help us to make the connection between our praying and our daily living.
- At the end of this booklet we have provided material to help individuals or groups to incorporate this material into a brief service, such as the Daily Office. The material is optional, and can be used flexibly.

Entering Lent

Ash Wednesday, 1 March

Read **Matthew 6: 5-6**

And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Reflect Our Father 'in secret' always hears our prayers. He is the one from whom no secrets are hidden.

Pray Lord of the desert, the Cross and the Resurrection, be with us as we begin our Lenten walk. Help us to pray, and pray rightly, to our Father in secret.

Act Carry out a 'prayer audit' on yourself. When do you pray, where, and for what? What might you develop this Lent?

Thursday 2 March

Read **Luke 9: 23**

If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

Reflect Following Jesus means that we are called to take up our own cross daily and follow him. This is costly and difficult for us.

Pray Lord, help me today to be faithful in following wherever you may lead me.

Act Name the cross in your life which Jesus asks you to carry today. Imagine yourself walking alongside Jesus as he carries his own cross.

Friday 3 March

Read **Matthew 9: 14–15**

Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘The wedding-guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.’

Reflect To fast is one way to focus the mind on God, which is always the purpose of Lent

Pray God our Father, focus our hearts and our minds on you as we follow your Son through this holy season.

Act Do you ever fast? If it is safe and healthy to do so, why not fast one meal a week through the rest of Lent and devote that time to prayer?

Saturday 4 March

Read **Isaiah 58:10**

If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

Reflect Fasting and repentance lead to changed attitudes and ways of living. As we reflect on our own selfishness and greed, we are led by the Holy Spirit to actions which are worthy of our repentance.

Pray Lord show me your ways and your truth, and help me to act in the ways of justice and righteousness.

Act Our diocese has a rich long-standing link with the Church in the Sudans, one of the poorest and most troubled parts of Africa. What can you do today to help the church to feed the hungry and help the afflicted?

Lent 1 - Temptation

Sunday 5 March

Read **Matthew 4: 7, 11**

Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."' Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Reflect When in our own lives do we put the Lord to the test?

Pray Lord, be with us when we face trial and temptation. Be our defence and our guard against the forces of evil, and fill our lives with your Spirit.

Act Look at your diary, or if you don't have one, jot down all the things you expect to do in the coming week. Can you identify one of them which is unhealthy or unhelpful, cross it out and put something else in its place?

Monday 6 March

Read **Matthew 25: 40**

Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

Reflect Every time I bring a helping hand or kind word to someone in need, I do it to Jesus.

Pray Lord open my eyes and my heart to those around me who are in need today.

Act We are now facing the biggest global refugee crisis for many years. What may I do to help someone who is a refugee today?

Tuesday 7 March

Read **Matthew 6: 7-8**

When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Reflect Prayer is not a shopping list, or a vending machine. It seems more like conversation with a friend who already knows us.

Pray Lord, teach us to pray to you as one friend talks to another. Help us to bring to you our whole lives.

Act Make a list of the things you want to thank God for, and then pray a special prayer of thanksgiving.

Wednesday 8 March

Read Psalm 51: 1-3

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Reflect The way to forgiveness and peace with God is through penitence and trust in God's steadfast love and mercy in Christ Jesus.

Pray Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

Act As you wash your hands today, reflect on the ways in which Christ washes us and cleanses us from our iniquity.

Thursday 9 March

Read **Matthew 7: 11-12**

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

Reflect Jesus seems to say that even evil people, people who are flawed, ought to be able to recognise the difference between good and evil.

Pray Lord God, eternal Good, help us to recognise the good and the evil in the world, and make a positive decision to serve and promote the good.

Act Jesus says we know how to give good gifts. In our Diocese there are a number of organisations which provide foodbanks for the hungry and care for the homeless. Make a donation today, however small, either in a collecting box or on-line, to some local charity which serves the poor or the homeless.

Friday 10 March

Read Psalm 130: 1 -2

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be
attentive to my cry for mercy.

Reflect When I desperately need help, I can cry
out to God for mercy. His goodness and
mercy will follow me all the days of my
life.

Pray Lord, I am weak. Save us and help us, and
all those in need this day, in Jesus Christ
our Lord. Amen.

Act Name an area of your life where you need
the help and mercy of God. Place this in
God's hands, trusting in his unfailing love
for you.

Saturday 11 March

Read **Matthew 5: 43-45**

You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

Reflect Loving neighbours and hating enemies is in a sense instinctive. Jesus calls for a radical new way of living, where his people try to love everyone.

Pray Father God, neighbour to all people, help us to try to love our enemies, and when that is very difficult, give us the strength to recognise that they are your people too.

Act Who might you consider to be an enemy - either of yourself personally, or perhaps of your community, or country, or faith? Can you identify anyone? Pray for them.

Lent 2 – Conflict

Sunday 12 March

Read **Romans 4: 3,13**

For what does the scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.’

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

Reflect Our righteousness flows from our faith in Jesus, and this tells us to whom we belong and where our loyalty and allegiance lies. To belong to Jesus is to become citizens of his kingdom.

Pray Lord help me today to live as a citizen of your kingdom. Conform my ways to the pattern of your holiness.

Act Think of something in your life that may need to change as you become more and more transformed into the righteousness of Jesus. Do something about this today.

Monday 13 March

Read Luke 6: 36–38

Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

Reflect We are to be generous in our giving, knowing that generosity to others is part of the way in which we serve God.

Pray God, give us your gift of generous giving, of our time, our gifts, and our resources; so that we may serve you in our brothers and sisters.

Act Look at this Gospel passage visually. Take some rice or grain and pour it into a glass: shake it together, press it down, and let it overflow, and rejoice in the generosity of God.

Tuesday 14 March

Read **Matthew 23: 12**

All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

Reflect The ways and values of Jesus may not be understood or appreciated by those around us. Followers of Jesus often have to swim against the tide in society.

Pray Lord, teach me your ways, and fashion my heart in the love of your humility.

Act Look out for someone today who you would not normally spend time with. Greet that person, by name if possible, and engage with them in conversation.

Wednesday 15 March

Read **Matthew 20: 25-28**

Jesus called them to him and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.’

Reflect What does it mean to be someone’s servant? Reclaiming the positive nature of ‘service’ is part of our ministry.

Pray Lord, help me to resist the desire to be “great” amongst the people with whom I live and work. Help me to recognise the worth of service.

Act Who do you work with, either in a voluntary or paid capacity, either in work or at home, or perhaps in church? Can you identify a way of serving one of them this week, perhaps by encouragement?

Thursday 16 March

Read **Jeremiah 17: 9-10**

The heart is devious above all else;
it is perverse –
who can understand it?
I the Lord test the mind
and search the heart,
to give to all according to their ways,
according to the fruit of their doings.

Reflect The fruit of the Holy Spirit is love and joy and peace. The Holy Spirit searches our hearts and helps us to become daily more like Jesus.

Pray Lord I offer you my heart today. May my heart be pure and full of holy love this day.

Act At the end of today, take a short time to think back on the moments during the day when you have known the fruit of the Holy Spirit present in your life.

Friday 17 March

Read **Matthew 21: 42-43**

Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures:

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes”?

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.'

Reflect This is a difficult passage addressed to leaders whom Christ considered to be failing in their duty of service to God. Jesus could at times be very direct, to the point of creating conflict.

Pray God our foundation stone and our support. Forgive us when we fail to be good and visible symbols of your care and love for all.

Act Our Cathedral spire points to the priority of the Kingdom of heaven in our lives and in our region. Make a list of places where you can see the growth of the Kingdom around you. Commit yourself to pray for those areas each day for the rest of Lent.

Saturday 18 March

Read Luke 15: 18-19

I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."

Reflect The prodigal son came to himself and took the long road home. He made the choice to humble himself and admit that he had gone wrong.

Pray Lord I am not worthy to gather up the crumbs under your table. But only say the word and I shall be made whole.

Act Is there something I must do to put right what I've done wrong? If so, do this today.

Lent 3 – Suffering Sunday 19 March

Read John 4: 23

The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.

Reflect Jesus is speaking here about the heart of worship. It is not our outward show that matters before God. God looks at the heart.

Pray Lord teach me to worship you first of all in spirit and in truth, and help me to love you with all my heart.

Act Worship is about worth-ship. What are the things in your life to which you ascribe worth or great value? Write a list of all the things that take up your time, energy and thought. Where does God fit in to this?

Monday 20 March

Read **Psalm 43: 5**

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

Reflect We can call out to God even when he seems far away or when we feel miserable or unworthy.

Pray Lord we thank you that your love never fails. Even when we feel lost and alone, still your love and mercy endure forever.

Act Much of our Diocese is made up of countryside and woodland, cliffs and seashore. Today try to notice the resilience of the natural world. Storms and darkness come and then go, but still the birds sing and the sun rises anew in the morning.

Tuesday 21 March

Read **Matthew 18: 21-22**

Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?'

Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'

Reflect Seventy times seven means that we never reach the end of our need to forgive others. Forgiveness and reconciliation are at the heart of the Gospel of Jesus.

Pray Lord, forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Act Take time today to reflect on Christ's teaching on forgiveness. Is there anyone who I need to forgive today? Is there something that I need to do to put this relationship right?

Wednesday 22 March

Read **Matthew 5: 17-18**

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.

Reflect This passage is all about how the events of the Old Testament and the New connect. Jesus is clear that there is continuity, not change, happening here.

Pray God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of the Law and the prophets; thank you for your faithfulness to us over so many years. Help us to be faithful to you, the fulfiller of the law.

Act Letters and strokes of letters, or 'jots and tittles', are crucial for us to understand things. Write out a verse or so of today's reading with no cross strokes, punctuation or dots.

Thursday 23 March

Read **Psalm 95: 6-7**

O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. O that today you would listen to his voice!

Reflect Our God is the creator of all things, our maker, and he will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.

Pray Lord, thank you that we are your people, the sheep of your hand. Help me to listen to your voice today.

Act To bow down or kneel before God is a posture which acknowledges his greatness and our dependence on him. Bow down or kneel before God for a few minutes in silent worship and adoration.

Friday 24 March

Read **Mark 12: 28-31**

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the

first of all?’ Jesus answered, ‘The first is, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” The second is this, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.’

Reflect When asked to summarise the commandments Jesus identifies loving God and loving neighbour as most important. For him it seems that in doing one we are also doing the other.

Pray Lord God of our neighbours as well as ourselves, teach us to serve you above all, through service to our neighbours.

Act Jesus is famously asked by one man, “Who is my neighbour?” Is there someone that you should have spoken to, or been in touch with, and haven’t done so for a while? Drop a note or an email to them to let them know that you care.

Saturday 25 March

Read Psalm 51: 17

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Reflect God desires truth in the inward being, not pretence. When, before God, we acknowledge with sorrow our own greed and selfishness, we find that he is full of mercy and quick to forgive.

Pray Lord, teach me to be truthful in my inward being, that my heart and my life may be pleasing to you.

Act Lent is widely observed as a time of self-denial. Today you may want to turn off the radio or TV for a short while and instead to sit quietly before God, reflecting on today's reading.

Lent 4 – Light and Darkness

Mothering Sunday, 26 March

Read **John 19: 25b-27**

Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.'

Reflect Not so very long ago we were celebrating Christmas. Here we find Mary at the foot of Christ's cross. Parenthood like all relationships carries both the potential for great joy and great sorrow.

Pray God our Father and our Mother, we thank you for the depth and blessing of relationships: into our joys and into our sorrows pour your love and grace that we may love more fully and be blessed by your grace.

Act On this Mothering Sunday make, or commit to, a charitable donation to one of the charities that supports families, such as the Diocesan Mothers' Union.

Monday 27 March

Read **John 4: 50**

Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live."
The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way.

Reflect The Christian life is a life of faith. We believe in the word that Jesus speaks to us, and we live according to his word.

Pray Lord, thank you that your words are the words of eternal life. Lead us into an ever deeper trust in your word and promises.

Act Write down some words of Jesus which speak truth to your heart. Think about what it means to live according to these words.

Tuesday 28 March

Read **John 5: 9b–13**

Now that day was a sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, ‘It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.’ But he answered them, ‘The man who made me well said to me, “Take up your mat and walk.”’ They asked him, ‘Who is the man who said to you, “Take it up and walk”?’ Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there.

Reflect For some people faith can come to as clear as crystal but for many faith comes as brief glimpses here and there as “Jesus disappears in the crowd” again.

Pray Lord of life, sometimes we can see you so clearly and at other times you disappear in the crowd. Keep us searching for you.

Act Does your local hospital have a chaplaincy department? Why not consider dropping a postcard to the chaplaincy team thanking them and assuring them of your prayers.

Wednesday 29 March

Read **Luke 13: 6-9**

Then he told this parable: ‘A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, “See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?” He replied, “Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.”’

Reflect There is something here about the justice and the mercy of God. Trees are supposed to bear fruit, and so are we, but God yearns to give us “one more year” to do it.

Pray God the gardener, you tend and prune and nurture your garden, willing the fruit to blossom and grow. Bless and help the farmers of our diocese, and make us all more ready to grow in your service.

Act Find a tree or a plant near you, and photograph it on your camera or phone. Take a photograph of it at different times of day this week, and wonder at its simplicity and complexity.

Thursday 30 March

Read **John 5: 39-42**

You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life. I do not accept glory from human beings. But I know that you do not have the love of God in you.

Reflect Jesus reminds his listeners that eternal life comes from something more than adherence to the words of a book, even a book as extraordinary as the Hebrew Scriptures: it comes from a relationship with a person.

Pray Word of Life, we thank you for the Scriptures in which we find the narrative of your love for us. Open our eyes and ears to find you in and beyond its pages.

Act Read a chapter of the Old Testament that you have never read before, or not read for a long time.

Friday 31 March

Read **John 7: 37-38**

Jesus cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"

Reflect Jesus calls out to all those who are thirsty and crying out for hope and meaning, for peace and abundant life. He says, "Come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink, and you will never be thirsty again."

Pray Lord I long for more of your living water, for more of the presence of your Holy Spirit in my life. Come, Holy Spirit, live in me today.

Act Pour yourself a cup or glass of water. Sit silently before this for a few minutes. Reflect before God on this precious gift of water and what it means in your life each day. Pray for those who do not have access to a single glass of clean water today.

Saturday 1 April

Read **John 7: 50–52**

Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of them, asked, ‘Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?’ They replied, ‘Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee.’

Reflect Nicodemus appeals to his colleagues to treat Christ in the way we now consider natural and instinctive for all people: to not to be tried without the due process of law.

Pray Lord our Judge, we thank you for the expectation that people are innocent until proven guilty: bless and support those who are not treated this way, and support them in their time of trial.

Act Look at the information on Amnesty International’s website concerning prisoners of conscience. If you feel able to, write a letter appealing for the release of one of those people.

Lent 5 – Victory of the Cross

Passion Sunday, 2 April

Read **Romans 8: 6, 11**

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Reflect Paul knew all about letting go of things that had been very important in his life. This involves loss and is costly, but is necessary in order that we may gain Christ and be found in him.

Pray Lord, give me grace to let go of all that hinders me from knowing Christ as Lord of my life, and being led by the Spirit in the ways of life and peace.

Act As you sit before God, hold out your hands before him. Then clench your fists as a sign of all that you are holding on to that is hindering your surrender to Christ as Lord. Then, when you are ready, slowly open your hands again as a prayer of letting go and letting Jesus be Lord in all of your life.

Monday 3 April

Read **John 8: 7-11**

When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'

Reflect This saying of Christ reminds us criticising others for their sin highlights our own, which should give us pause for thought.

Pray God of mercy, swift to forgive, forgive me when I focus on other people's faults to disguise my own.

Act Find or fashion for yourself a cross and position it somewhere where you can gaze upon it every day in these two weeks to give focus to this holiest period of the year.

Tuesday 4 April

Read **John 8: 23-24**

Jesus said to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.”

Reflect We believe that Jesus is the Son of God, God in human form. In his life we see perfect love and perfect truth; in him we see what God is like. God is love, and he has come to us, born as one of us.

Pray Lord I believe that you are the Son of God. Help me in my unbelief.

Act Spend time today reading some of the claims that Jesus made about himself such as the verse above. Reflect on what it means for you to believe that Jesus is indeed the Son of God, that he is God in human form.

Wednesday 5 April

Read **John 8: 31-32**

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'

Reflect As paradoxical as it seems, true freedom is found in committing ourselves to the service of one man, Jesus Christ. He is the truth that sets us free

Pray Jesus Christ, our Master and our Lord: help us to walk the way of discipleship, to know the truth, and to be ready for that truth to set us free.

Act Return to your cross, and hang on it or place next to it a piece of paper on which you have listed that which separates you from committing to the freedom Christ offers. On Good Friday, burn or otherwise destroy it.

Thursday 6 April

Read **John 8: 54**

Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, he of whom you say, 'He is our God,' though you do not know him."

Reflect Jesus does not glorify himself. He empties himself, taking the form of a slave. He is gentle and humble in heart.

Pray Lord help me to let go of my desire for significance and glory. Teach me your way of holy love and humility.

Act To be humble is to be known for who I really am. Ask someone you know well to say in a few words what they value about the person that you are. You may learn a lot from what is said, and also from what is not said.

Friday 7 April

Read **John 10: 31-33**

The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus replied, 'I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?' The Jews answered, 'It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God.'

Reflect To recognise the divine in a complex world can be profoundly difficult. The justification for attempting to stone Christ is that he is claiming for himself divinity: this is the truth though it is difficult to see.

Pray Lord Jesus Christ, man and God, help us to be perceptive to the signs of divinity in our world.

Act Take a pile of stones, perhaps from your garden, and use them as a focus today for all the things that you are tempted to criticise other people for. At the end of the day quietly put them down somewhere rather than throwing them.

Saturday 8 April

Read **Matthew 1: 22**

All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, ‘God is with us.’”

Reflect Emmanuel means ‘God is with us.’ Jesus our Emmanuel, who was born of Mary in the stable at Bethlehem, was put to death by crucifixion.

Pray Lord you came to us to show us your great love and unending goodness towards us. Yet we despised and put to death the One who is our Lord and Saviour. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Act Today we reflect that God loved the world so much that he gave us his Son. When we act in love, we continue God’s work of love in his beloved world. Today, do some particular act of love and kindness in thanksgiving for God’s great love for us all.

Holy Week - Way of the Cross

Palm Sunday, 9 April

Read **Matthew 21: 8-9**

A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,
'Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

Reflect Jesus is clear that the cry for redemption is not just from humanity but from the entire created order. He says that even the stones on the ground yearn for the coming of the kingdom.

Pray Hosanna to you, O son of David, entering your city as king. Draw us into the cry of all creation as we long for your kingdom to dawn.

Act Go back to the tree which you looked at several weeks ago and take another photograph. How has this created thing changed? Wonder at the glory of creation.

Monday 10 April

Read **John 12: 3**

Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Reflect Mary showed her love for Jesus by pouring out a pure and costly gift to anoint him through whom all things were made, as her Lord and Saviour.

Pray Lord, help me to honour you with my gifts and my care of all that you have given to me.

Act Look around you at the beauty of God's creation which surround us in both Dorset and Wiltshire. All that we have is a gift from God. Choose one thing that you can do today to care for God's world.

Tuesday 11 April

Read **John 12: 30-35a**

Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all

people to myself.' He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. The crowd answered him, 'We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains for ever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?' Jesus said to them, 'The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going.'

Reflect In the days before artificial light, walking in the dark was profoundly difficult. There was real risk involved, and Jesus analogy of walking with the light would have been all the more profound.

Pray Lord Jesus, the light of the World, as we move through this most Holy Week, shed your light upon us that in the gathering darkness we may know your eternal and everlasting light.

Act Wait until it is quite dark and sit somewhere where you can easily turn off the artificial light in the room. When it is safe to do so, turn the light off and feel the darkness around you. Pray the Lord's Prayer, and give thanks for God's presence.

Wednesday 12 April

Read Hebrews 12: 1b-2a

Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame.

Reflect Jesus is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. He shows us that we will face suffering and will need to persevere through trials and testing, trusting in his victory.

Pray Lord, strengthen me to run with perseverance the race that is set before me today, looking unto Jesus.

Act In our Diocese we are very aware of the work, service and commitment of the Armed Forces. They set an example of courage and resilience for all of us. All of us face tasks and challenges in life which we would rather avoid. Think of a difficult or costly task that lies before you. Consider how you will act on this, and ask God to help you.

Maundy Thursday, 13 April

Read **John 13: 34–35**

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

Reflect It's not by clever words, or articulate theology, or purity of life that Jesus expects his people to be recognised, but by the simple but far more difficult witness of loving those around us.

Pray Jesus our Servant King, who on this day knelt at the feet of your friends to cleanse them; help us not to be too proud or too self-conscious to do the same thing for the people around us.

Act The washing of the feet is all about service to individuals and community. Keep an eye out today for something that needs putting in the bin or something that needs tidying and simply do that act of service to your local area.

Good Friday, 14 April

Read **John 19: 30**

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Reflect When Jesus said, “It is finished”, he knew that his work on earth had been completed. He had done all that the Father had asked of him and had laid down his life for us all.

Pray Lord Jesus Christ, your body was broken for me, and your blood was shed for the forgiveness of my sins. I thank you with all my heart that you laid down your life for me.

Act Spend time today in silent prayer before the cross of Christ.

Holy Saturday, 15 April

Read **Matthew 27: 62-66**

The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, “Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, “After three days I will rise again.” Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third

day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, “He has been raised from the dead”, and the last deception would be worse than the first.’ Pilate said to them, ‘You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.’ So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

Reflect Our fear can often entomb us, even if we think that we are locking away the things we fear. Praise God that Jesus could not be locked safely away, and that fear couldn’t keep the stone in place.

Pray Lord Jesus, who on this day rested in the tomb, be with all those who feel life has fled from them.

Act Holy Saturday is supposed to be a day of quiet reflection, but it is also the day on which the women prepared to anoint Jesus’ body. Do something spontaneous today, no matter how small, to remind you that fear does not win.

Easter Day, 16 April

- Read** **Matthew 28: 5-6**
But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.'
- Reflect** Easter turns the world upside down. That which we thought was dead is alive, that which we thought was the end is in fact the beginning. Alleluia!
- Pray** Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Glory to you O risen Lord for your wonderful resurrection, for the promise of salvation, for the open tomb and the stone rolled away, and light and life for all. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
- Act** Go back to your wooden cross and if you are able to, take it outside, or plant it in a plant pot inside, somewhere green and growing, and give thanks that out of an instrument of death a garden of life pours forth.

You may find it helpful to incorporate the daily reflections in a short act of worship. This material will help you do so in a shorter form of the Daily Office, the prayers that the Church says together morning and evening.

It is entirely optional. It can be used by individuals or groups, and as flexibly as required.

A Brief Act of Worship

Gathering

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit:**

**as it was in the beginning, is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word

Use the material for today's date at this point in the service. You might like to follow that with a profound period of silence.

Canticle

After the silence, the Benedictus may be said (in the morning) or the Magnificat (in the afternoon or evening).

Benedictus

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,
who has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of his servant David. Through
his holy prophets God promised of old
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us,

To show mercy to our ancestors,
and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath God swore to our father
Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

Free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the
Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his
way,

To give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of all their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 1: 68–79

Glory to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning,
is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Magnificat

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed;
the Almighty has done great things for me
and holy is his name.

He has mercy on those who fear him,
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm
and has scattered the proud in their conceit,

Casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,
to remember his promise of mercy,

The promise made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Luke 1: 46–55

Glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy
Spirit:

as it was in the beginning, is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Prayers

Lord God,
we ask you to give us your blessing;
to your church, holiness
to the world, peace
to our nation, justice
and to all people knowledge of your law:
keep safe our families,
protect the weak,
heal the sick,
comfort the dying,
and bring us all to a joyful resurrection;
we ask these things through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

Conclusion

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all ever more. Amen.

Material from *Common Worship*,
which is included in this order of service,
is copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2000 and 2008.

Renewing *HOPE* Pray • Serve • Grow

Reflections and prayers by the Revd Ian Cowley and
Canon Tom Clammer.

Cover photo © Ash Mills. Taken at Salisbury
Cathedral.

Scripture quotations are from the New Revised
Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition,
copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the
Churches of Christ in the United States of America.
Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

To order more copies, please contact the Diocese of
Salisbury on 01722 411 922 or enquiries@salisbury.
anglican.org.

Printed by Verité, Unit 2 Martlets Way, Goring
Business Park, Goring-by-Sea, BN12 4HF.

www.salisbury.anglican.org