

Passiontide

Traditionally, the final two weeks of Lent are used as an immediate preparation for the sorrowful events of the Easter drama. It is a period of time to focus more and more on the Passion and death of Jesus and so accompany him on his way to Calvary. The Fifth Sunday of Lent is often called Passion Sunday, and many churches veil crosses, statues and other images in purple from today until the Easter Vigil. This is a reminder of the heightened penitential nature of the last two weeks before Easter Day. Passiontide invites us to reflect on the sins that separate us from God and from each other, to repent of those sins, and to experience the joy and freedom of forgiveness from the Lord. Jesus died on the cross to pay the price of your sins and mine; he died to set us free and repair our relationship with our loving Father. This is the time for reconciliation. Knowing we are forgiven leads to real thanksgiving; there is real joy in claiming our forgiveness and new life in Christ. Our Easter joy will be the greater if we use these two weeks to prepare our hearts and souls to receive the graces God offers us in the Paschal mystery.

Prayers to Remember

Prayers to Remember O Lord Jesu Christ, take us to thyself, draw us with cords to the foot of the cross; for we have no strength to come, and we know not the way. Thou art mighty to save, and none can separate us from thy love. Bring us home to thyself, for we are gone astray. We have wandered; do thou seek us. Under the shadow of thy cross let us live all the rest of our lives, and there we shall be safe. Amen.

Frederick Temple

From the Fathers

"The whole mystery of faith can be seen in the story of Isaac. The lamb is fixed to the tree, suspended by its horns: the first-born carried upon him the wood for the sacrifice. He, then, who upholds the universe by the word of his power, is the same who bears the burden of our wood, and is hung up on the wood, upholding as God, and carried as the lamb, the Holy Spirit having in figure divided the mystery between the two, the only son and the lamb who appears at his side. In the lamb is revealed the mystery of death and in the only son the life which will never be cut short."

Homilies on the Resurrection, St Gregory of Nyssa (335-395)

21st March
2021

The Fifth Sunday
of Lent

Father, Glorify your Name



Today's Gospel reading is the immediate prelude to the account of the Last Supper and the Passion of Christ. It is full of Jesus' own dread, mixed with confidence, at what he knows lies ahead. In John's Gospel, there is no agony in the garden before Jesus' arrest, since John's account of the Passion focuses on the triumph of Jesus. He remains in control from the beginning, when he allows the guards to take him away, until the very end when he cries 'It is finished.' This is the exaltation of the Son of Man. Jesus's dialogue with his Father is John's equivalent of the prayer in the garden. His fear is real, but he has confidence in his Father. 'Save me from this hour?' No, 'for this is the very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.' We live in a time of great fear. What is it that frightens you most? Are you afraid of death? Or are you afraid of life? Are you anxious about the state of the world or life after Covid-19? Whatever it is that you fear, name it and take it to Jesus today. With him, entrust your fear to the Father. Do not allow fear to imprison you. He will set you free.