

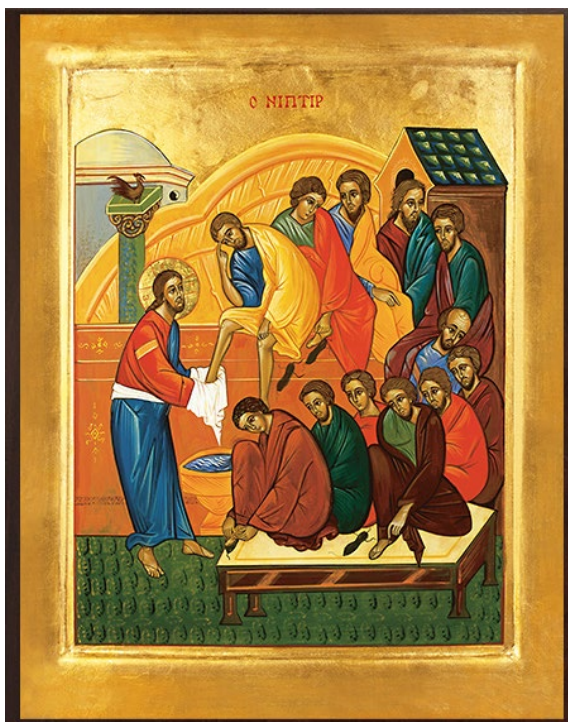
# Holy Week, remembering the Last Supper, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection

During Holy Week, we remember and ponder events in the final days of the earthly life of Jesus – his last meal with his disciples, his torture and murder by crucifixion the next day, and three days later, his triumphant resurrection. Each is of monumental importance in our understanding of our faith and because of this, are worthy of our deep reflection and prayer, alone and with our faith community.

As you pause to address your thoughts to this prayer resource, endeavour to cast aside the concerns of the day and the social busyness that the Easter long weekend can entail, and become still and settled. You might like to light a candle to help you focus and remind you that God is always with you. Mary Wickham's prayerful poem might assist:

## Slow Prayer

Into the silence that stills  
into the stillness that warms  
into the warmth that lights  
into the light that calms  
into the calm that loves  
into the love that is  
lead my noisy needing spirit, O God.  
Into the silence that stills...



... **during supper** Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.'

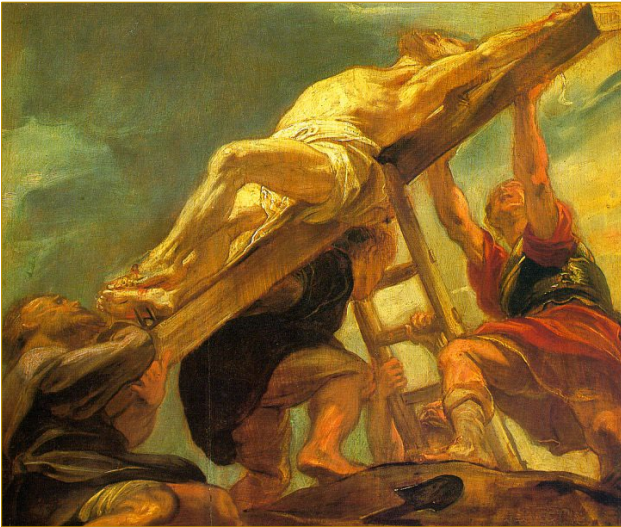
John 13:3-8

*The Washing of the Feet, Sr Marie-Paul Farran OSB,  
Conception Abbey*

**To ponder...** This extraordinary act by Jesus, of engaging so personally with his disciples, can be confronting and confusing. Yet, Jesus is clear – he came to serve and asks that we do likewise. We also serve and are served by others. Similarly, we receive mercy from others and offer it to others. Ponder how you bring a spirit of service and mercy into your own life...

## Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.

Luke 23:34



*The raising of the cross, Pierre Paul Rubens, 1620*

During his trial, sentencing and execution, Jesus – the Son of God – retained his dignity, despite the ugliness and injustice of his painful suffering.

Unjust suffering is part of our lives, even if only occasionally. We are unlikely to meet our death in consequence of injustice as Jesus did, yet when we experience injustice, we must choose our response.

During her life, Catherine certainly experienced hostile opposition and attempts to limit or stop her work to serve people in need. She also retained her dignity and sense of purpose.

*Catherine learned in her relationships with bigoted and hostile people that gentleness and kindness in the face of hostility achieved more than defense or argument. Catherine experienced her own powerlessness to change the opinions, particularly religious prejudices, of those with whom she lived. ... The spirituality of her times ... did offer a way "to accept suffering rather than inflict it." Catherine encouraged her Sisters to practice the virtues of gentleness, humility, compassion, and reconciliation.*

*Catherine McAuley and Nonviolence, Janet K Ruffing, The Mast, 2007, 1, 33-40.*

**To ponder...** Recall times in your life when you or someone you care deeply about has been the victim of injustice. What were the feelings this evoked? Punishment, rejection and other reactions based on injustice rankle within us. We long to be heard, yet we aren't. Maybe some others care, but they aren't the decision-makers. There is an awful aloneness about injustice, and Jesus grappled with this during his final days and hours.

## Memo for Easter

Mary Wickham rsm

Holy Thursday: wash the feet of an Iraqi mother;

Good Friday: bring a flower to the cross for her dying child;

Holy Saturday, the day of waiting:

light a candle from the great primeval life fire of Easter

immersed in the flowing waters of creation.

Light it for a humanity whose inventiveness is so often destructive,

whose intentions are so often terrible

whose actions are so often horrifying.

Sunday, early, in a garden,

watch and listen for reminders of hope,

for seeds of faith, for signs of love...

for signs of love.

Monday: same as Sunday.





**Mary stood weeping outside the tomb.** As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.’ When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?’ Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbouni!’ (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, ‘Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”’ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

John 20:11-18

He Qi, *The Risen Christ*



## Awaken Me

Risen One,  
come, meet me  
in the garden of my life.

Lure me into elation.  
Revive my silent hope.  
Coax my dormant dreams.  
Raise up my neglected gratitude.  
Entice my tired enthusiasm.  
Give life to my faltering relationships.  
Roll back the stone of my indifference.  
Unwrap the deadness in my spiritual life.  
Impart heartiness in my work.

Risen One,  
send me forth as a disciple of your unwavering love,  
a messenger of your unlimited joy.

Resurrected One,  
may I become  
ever more convinced  
that your presence lives on,  
and on, and on, and on.

Awaken me!  
Awaken me!

Joyce Rupp (from *Out of the Ordinary*)

**Resurrected One,  
may I become  
ever more convinced  
that your presence  
lives on,  
and on, and on, and on.**