

WALKING THE WAY OF SORROWS

In-Home Mid-Week Lenten Service

April 1, 2020



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

85 E. Brandt Boulevard

Landisville, PA

***United in Christ,
We are called to love and serve.***

WALKING THE WAY OF SORROWS

Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother

(as told by Mary of Nazareth)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Trusting in the promise of God's covenant with us, let us be bold to confess our sin.

Please take time for reflection and self-examination.

Most faithful God,

we confess that we have failed to be faithful in our promises to you and to walk in the way of Christ. We neglect to serve others; we turn from the good you created in us, and in so doing we allow evil to increase. We look to you for mercy and healing. Strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and guide us in the path of humble service. Amen.

All who turn to God in repentance find their sin forgiven for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Deny yourselves, then take up your cross and follow him.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit is with you always.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The promise of God is clear. When we return to the Lord, God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. When we return to the Lord with weeping and fasting, God forgives our sin and blesses us with a renewed and deepened relationship with the almighty. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 6:10

Make the minds of the people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed.

The Word of the Lord.

LENTEN MONOLOGUE

Jesus is Nailed to the Cross (as seen by the soldier on duty)

The trick is not to look them in the eye. You drag them, you kick them, you crucify them, but you don't look them in the eye. If you slip up and look into their eyes, you can't do the job. You are here to do this job. So do it, but don't get involved

I had learned my lesson well. When I first came to this land, I was young and ignorant and didn't pay attention to what the commander told us in training. "We don't crucify *Romans*," he emphasized, "so you don't need to worry. You won't hurt anybody who matters. All these are slaves and criminals, but they are not Romans. Think of them in those words – slaves and criminals. We all know that Rome didn't get where she is by being soft. We have to show them who is strong. We have to show them who has the power, who is number one. So don't pity them. Show them who it was who brought them peace, the great Pax Romana."

I should have listened to the commander that first time. But I looked into the boy's eyes – that's what he was, a boy like me – and then I couldn't drive the nail. I froze. The other soldier on the detail wasn't squeamish. He's done it before. So he lifted the hammer and drove the nail. I heard it tear through the flesh and the bones of the ankle; I heard the boy's scream rip the air around me, and I was deathly sick. The others laughed at me, and then they forced me to do it. Standing above my head, bent over as I was, they taunted me until I lifted the hammer and drove the nail through the hands. The boy turned one more time to look at me, his mouth open in a silent scream this time, and then he passed out. I wanted to do the same, but the other soldiers were watching me closely. It doesn't pay to be a coward and a Roman. So I obeyed orders. That's the second trick. Obey orders. Don't look them in the eye and obey orders. If you don't think of them as boys, or men, or Syrians, or Jews, or Germans, you can make it. Think of them as enemies, as slaves and prisoners, and you can do it.

Then it becomes routine. Like everything else, killing becomes routine. You get used to it. The more you do it, the easier it becomes.

I was on the job that spring day, when Pilate was still procurator of Judea. It was the time of the Jewish Passover, and that always meant trouble. It celebrated some memory they had of old, of victory, or some escape, I understand, and that gave them the courage they

lack at other times. So we were told to be on the watch. “Troublemakers, priests, and prophets,” the commander sneered. “They cause the problems. So watch out. I hear there is one among them who is causing all kinds of furor and adulation. They told me he entered Jerusalem on the first day of the week and the crowd went wild. It was all connected with their strange symbolism. They said he rode in on a donkey, so I guess he’s scared to appear to us like a rabble rouser. But the rest of it was weird. They covered the way with leafy branches, and some even spread their cloaks on the road. So be on the lookout. These Jews are ripe for revolt.

But they caught him early, and it seems that, after all, he had no followers. If he did before, they have disappeared already. No one challenged us. He seems to have had more women followers than men. Look around. These women are standing by, and I’ve got to hand it to them. They are weeping, but they don’t flinch. A strange lot.

I am on the crucifixion detail. It’s been a long time since I got sick from the thought of it. Like I said – you get used to anything if you do it often enough. And the trick is not to look them in the eye. I’ve been careful since that first time.

First, they told me to nail a sign on the cross – I can’t read it, but someone said it means *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*. Give it to us Romans – our sense of humor doesn’t desert us. But I wish I hadn’t learned his name. So I lifted the hammer to bring it down on the wrists, and it was at that moment I heard his voice. I was used to the cursing – that’s the usual response, to curse us nonstop while they still have breath. But this one, this fake king, said not a word. “He’s a quiet one,” I said to my buddy, but he grunted, “You watch out for the quiet ones.” And then the prisoner spoke in a voice that made me jump out of my skin, “When you think of this, my son, remember, I forgive you.”

I pretended I hadn’t heard because my insides started shaking. “Not again,” I thought, “by Mars, not again.” Habit kicked in, and I finished the job and managed not to look him in the eye.

But now, here in the dark, seeing the outline of the cross against the night sky, I sit and weep.

PRAYERS

O Christ Jesus, how many of us have driven nails in your hands without knowing we were doing so. Have mercy on us.

Throughout the centuries many of us, as obedient soldiers, have killed others while obeying orders. Have mercy on us.

Many of us with our money, our vote, our will, our orders, and our words have caused others to find untimely and violent deaths. Forgive us, Lord.

As you forgave those who crucified you, we also ask for your forgiveness. Lord have mercy on us. Christ have mercy on us. Lord have mercy on us. Amen

† **THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD** †

Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God, we give you thanks and praise.

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, and wisdom for life. For your Word of life, O God, we give you thanks and praise.

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness by the power of forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, and the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God, we give you thanks and praise.

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

BLESSING

May the blessing of Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit be with you today and always.

Peace be with you throughout these challenging times. Amen.

The theme of this year's Mid-Week Lenten Services has been *Walking the Way of Sorrows*. Each week we entered into Christ's journey to the cross based on Katerina Katsarka Whitley's first-person monologues reflecting various stations of the cross.

God has had mercy on us all throughout this Lenten season as we experienced stories that have caused us to feel pain, hope, love, and gratitude so that through the darkness of the crucifixion we may truly recognize the Light of Christ.

I pray these monologues were meaningful to you. *Pastor C*



April 5

Palm Sunday Services

April 9

Maundy Thursday

April 10

Good Friday

April 12

Easter Sunday

Christ is Risen; He is Risen Indeed!

**We plan to video the above Holy Week Services.
Additional information will be forwarded to you.
Please be on the watch!!**

*Stay healthy. Stay home. Wash your hands. Eat well. Pray.
Stay in touch with others. Read a good book. Put a jig saw puzzle together.
Don't let yourself get bored!
This, too, shall pass.*