

PRAYING LENT

From the *Online Ministries*, CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY

Preparing for Good Friday

Good Friday Opening Prayer:

**Remember your mercies, O Lord,
and with your eternal protection sanctify your
servants,
for whom Christ your Son,
by the shedding of his Blood,
established the Paschal Mystery.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.**

We enter the liturgy on Good Friday in silence. We don't need a "gathering rite." It is as though we have been "gathered" since the night before. The first act of the liturgy is for the Presider and ministers to lay face down before the cross, in silence. As with all liturgical rituals, that invites *us* to lay prostrate before the cross as well. That takes some preparation.

*When the Presider lays face down,
perhaps I will want to simply open my
hands and say "I know this is for me;
thank you."*

We can prepare to begin the Good Friday celebration by reflecting upon ourselves laying there - with all the feelings we want to identify and pay attention to. Our feelings may not be consistent or even inspiring. I might feel awe, gratitude, guilt, powerlessness, all at once. In my reflection preparing for Good Friday, I prepare that brief silent moment at the beginning of the service. Perhaps I will want to simply open my hands when the Presider lays face down and say "I know this is all for me; thank you."

The scripture readings take on a special power today, from the quiet and solemnity of the service.

The General Intercessions

These prayers, and their style, are perhaps the oldest liturgical ritual we have. They link us to the prayer of our sisters and brothers down through the centuries. They also give us a sense of our long tradition of public prayer. The Presider makes an invitation to pray - saying who it is we pray for and

These prayers are perhaps the oldest liturgical ritual we have. They link us to the prayer of our sisters and brothers down through the centuries.

what it is that we ask. We respond to the invitation with our silent prayer. Then, the Presider prays out loud in our name, first praising God and naming how God has been loving and caring for the person or need we present, then asking for a particular grace. We affirm that prayer with our "Amen." We could prepare for these great intercessions by reflection on our prayer for each of the people and needs to the right. That will help us with our responding to the invitation to pray in silence, and to appreciate the powerful words of these ancient prayers.

Adoration of the Holy Cross.

We adore the cross upon which our Savior gained for us the salvation of the world. We do that concretely by venerating an actual cross in our churches, which represents that divine act of love. This rite of veneration is called "The Showing of the Holy Cross."

Visit the *Online Ministries* site: *Praying Lent*.

In addition to this resource for Lent, there are many others to support our journey through Lent. And, there is a **Lenten Daily Prayer** for each day of Lent.

www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/online.html

To "venerate" is becoming a lost experience to many of our cultures. In our growing "equal-itarianism," we want and expect everyone to be "equal" (which is a good thing). But, sometimes it is at the expense of reverence. To revere a wise person, an extraordinary role model, or someone who has struggled heroically, is still very important. And part of that is to have reverence for places or objects or symbols which are full of meaning and very special significance for us, because they re-connect us with relationships.

Visiting the place where I grew up, holding a newborn baby, treasuring a gift from a loved one, seeing a photograph or piece of art that stirs my spirit, and a thousand other places and things, all can become "religious" and objects of veneration.

We revere and venerate the wood of the cross, because our Savior was nailed there, and gave his life for us there. Preparing for this special veneration on Good Friday is very important. We may want to pray by making the Stations of the Cross, in our church, or in the privacy of our home, or with our Online version at:
<http://www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/stations.html>

We want to be prepared to touch, kiss, embrace the cross with the greatest devotion we can express. We want our gesture to be able to ritualize our acceptance for the love, forgiveness and everlasting life that flows from that cross. We want to feel the love of Jesus, to feel it as being "for me," and to express our grateful response as reverence.

Receiving the Eucharist from the Holy Thursday Celebration of the Lord's Supper.

We fast from celebrating the Eucharist today, but we are gathered by the Spirit to re-connect with our celebration of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. We do not want to forget what that liturgy continues to mean for us. This is the bread that gives life. This is his self-giving love for us. This is our nourishment for our mission.



Prayer After Communion.

**Almighty ever-living God,
who have restored us to life
by the blessed Death, Resurrection
of your Christ,
preserve in us the work of your mercy,
that, by partaking of this mystery,
we may have a life unceasingly devoted to you.
Through Christ our Lord.**

Departing in Silence, Again.

With closing prayer and a blessing, we again depart in silence. We are a people who are full of faith, but who continue to wait for the fullness of our redemption. Our leaving in silence links this celebration to the Easter Vigil, as our beginning in silence connected us with Holy Thursday.

Good Friday Closing Prayer:

**May abundant blessings, O Lord, we pray,
descend upon your people,
who have honored the Death of your Son
in the hope of their resurrection:
may pardon come,
comfort be given,
holy faith increase,
and everlasting redemption be made secure.**

**After the celebration, the altar is stripped
but the cross remains with two candles lit.**