

Good Friday

The Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ

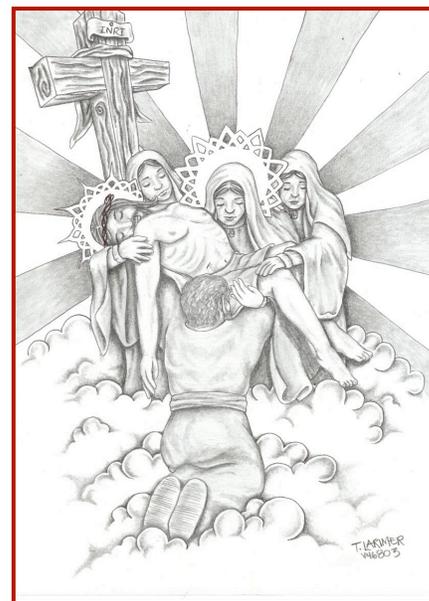
Cycle A | April 3, 2026

A Mother's Testimony- RACHEL

I am the mother of an incarcerated son, and my life has forever changed. I am forever sad. I am sad because there is a piece of my heart that is missing, a beat that is skipping. There is an empty seat at my table, an empty bedroom in my house. There is always a missing laughter in my ear, a missing kiss that wishes me goodnight. There is a pain and desperation that doesn't seem to leave. I am forever worrying. I worry about all the little things that mothers worry about. Is he hungry? Is he cold or too hot? Is he healthy? Is he happy today, or is he sad? Is he missing me as much as I miss him? Will they treat him as God's child or see him as a criminal? I am forever praying. I pray every minute of the day for God to surround my son with his tender love and care, to give him strength and courage, to give him peace and tranquility, and to let him feel His presence, particularly in times of loneliness. I pray for his Guardian Angel to protect and guard him. I pray for the Holy Spirit to guide every step he takes on this journey. I pray for the Blessed Mother to give him comfort, especially at night when he puts his head down to sleep. I am forever waiting. I wait for the day when my most precious gift from God is returned to me... On that day, my heart will be complete again.

A Son's Testimony- EZEQUIEL

Being incarcerated at the age of 15 and being sent to prison to serve 23 years is a hard task. But the most crucial part is not knowing if I'll be able to see my mother during this time. I know I had the chance to be with her prior to my incarceration, but my ignorance caused my life to become a nightmare; a nightmare that keeps not only my parents but the parents of many inmates who are not legal citizens of the United States awake all night thinking if their children are okay; praying that one day they could be able to not only see their children, but hug their children. I was not educated when I got incarcerated. I studied hard to bring a smile to my mother's face. I changed my ways to make amends with my mother. I'm in prison and my mother can't even visit me to see all I did for her. She is getting old and so am I. I don't want to be in prison and receive the dreadful call that she has been taken away from this world without getting the chance to see her smile, the smile I worked so hard to bring out of her after many years of suffering. The smile I never saw as a child; the smile that got stolen by an ignorant young gang member. The same young gang member no longer exists. I'm just another young man that craves a warm hug and a warm smile from his mom.



Artist: T. Larimer

OPENING PRAYER

Lord God,
You invite me to share in the glory of the resurrection. Stay with me as I struggle to see how accepting the crosses of my life will free me from the power of the one who wants only to destroy my love and trust in you. Help me to be humble and be accepting like your son, Jesus. I want to turn to you with the same trust he had in your love. Save me, Lord. Only you can save me and bring me to the light. Amen.



LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

See, my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high and greatly exalted. Even as many were amazed at him--so marred was his look beyond human semblance and his appearance beyond that of the sons of man--so shall he startle many nations, because of him kings shall stand speechless; for those who have not been told shall see, those who have not heard shall ponder it. Who would believe what we have heard? To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up like a sapling before him, like a shoot from the parched earth; there was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance that would attract us to him. He was spurned and avoided by people, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, one of those from whom people hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem. Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins; upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; but the LORD laid upon him the guilt of us all. Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth. Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away, and who would have thought any more of his destiny? When he was cut off from the land of the living, and smitten for the sin of his people, a grave was assigned him among the wicked and a burial place with evildoers, though he had done no wrong nor spoken any falsehood. But the LORD was pleased to crush him in infirmity. If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the LORD shall be accomplished through him. Because of his affliction he shall see the light in fullness of days; through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear. Therefore I will give him his portion among the great, and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty, because he surrendered himself to death and was counted among the wicked; and he shall take away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses.

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-16

R. Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

In you, O LORD, I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame.

In your justice rescue me.

Into your hands I commend my spirit;
you will redeem me, O LORD, O faithful God.

R. Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

For all my foes I am an object of reproach,
a laughingstock to my neighbors, and a dread
to my friends;

they who see me abroad flee from me.

I am forgotten like the unremembered dead;

I am like a dish that is broken.

R. Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

But my trust is in you, O LORD;

I say, "You are my God.

In your hands is my destiny; rescue me

from the clutches of my enemies and my persecutors."

R. Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

Second Reading: Hebrew 4:14-16; 5:7-9

Brothers and sisters: Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help. In the days when Christ was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

The Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

Gospel: John 19: 25-20 (Taken from the Gospel John 18:1-19:42)

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst." There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, "It is finished." And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



MEDITATION: IN THE ARMS OF MARY

(through the eyes of mary)

at last it was time
to bring my son down
from the cross
the earth had
stopped shaking

the soldiers were pushing
a small platform
in front of the crosses
starting with dismas
i went over to his mother
who was bent over
and destroyed inside
began consoling her
in the midst of her sorrow
the soldiers were
handing her dismas

now they were in front
of jesus' cross
these two soldiers
hurriedly taking out
the nails in the hands
one soldier
holding jesus in place
while the other was
taking out the stake
in jesus' feet
it seemed as if
jesus' body was
weightless

i spread out my mantle
on the ground
i sat on the cloak
these two soldiers
slowly handed me jesus
blood staining my cloak
holding my son in my arms
looking into his face
feeling his body
against my body
gently rubbing my hand
against jesus' face
at last i could hold him
in my hands

was not aware
of anything else
except this one
in my arms
jesus having lost
so much blood

that he was light
in my arms
i knew my son
could hear me
somewhere
after these last days
of suffering
of torture
needed to
whisper softly

jesus
at last
i have you in my arms
having experienced
such darkness
during these days
my heart has been
broken so many times
since your arrest
i have seen the cruel
face of darkness
i want to tell you
that i have felt
the presence of
your abba
i know you are
together now
thank you jesus
for being my son
for all you have given me

at this moment
women came close
with cloths
with water
sitting down
taking the cloths
dampened in water
i started with jesus' face
slowly the dried blood
fell away
the cloth entering
the deep wounds

another cloth
gently cleaning
the wound on jesus' side
taking his hands
looking at them
destroyed
a huge hole where
the spikes had penetrated
it was as if
there was a light

still flowing
from these wounds
now taking another cloth
how does one
clean jesus' back?
the flesh was hanging
off his back
there was so little to clean
as i peered at jesus's back
my friends tried to clean
the wounds where
the lashes had fallen

i was feeling
my son close
he was with us somehow
he was present

at that moment
the two mothers of
the other crucified ones
came over
we cleaned the bodies
of our sons together

all the pure and religious
had wandered
down the hill
it was only a few of us left
they bent down
taking jesus' pierced feet
into their arms
with huge holes

how many mothers
would experience
what we were feeling?
holding our dead sons
in our arms
with their blood
soaking through clothes
cries of sorrow so loud
they were silent

no noise
nothing else was moving
in the universe
i was holding the body
i gave birth to
the body i had bathed
so many times
this was the last time
i would bathe
the body of my son

the only comfort
was the rubbing
of the cloth
against his skin
again and again
becoming aware
not only of jesus
but of his abba

such a deep mystery
as we held jesus
in our hands
washing jesus
with these women
broken hearted mothers
connected to the love
from jesus' abba's heart
love from their
mothers' hearts
being with
walking with
accompanying
their criminal sons as
they were laughed at
made fun of
being accused of
not raising their sons
in a good way
being yelled at
how they had failed
as mothers
look how their
criminal sons
had ended up
carrying a cross

this love
they had for their sons
was like the love strong
flowing from the heart
of jesus' abba

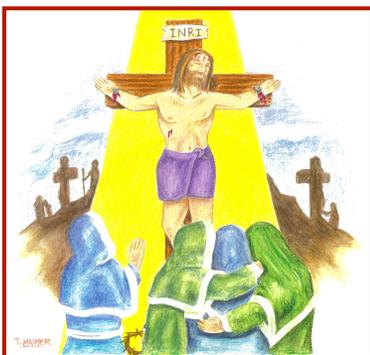
these two mothers
were also showing
the face of god
on this day
on this hill
love without conditions
self-giving
forgiving love



REFLECTION: A LETTER...

Dear Mom,

*I am very sorry for the pain I have caused you. I remember the first time you visited me when I was locked up....
I remember.... I remember...*



Artist: T. Larimer

CLOSING PRAYER

Mary,

You received Jesus in your arms. You held him in your arms. You bathed him one last time. Even in this darkness, you had other mothers help you. Even in this darkness, you were able to feel your son's presence.

Be with me, Mary, in times of darkness and tragedies. Let me know I am not alone. Hold me in your arms. Amen.

