

God the Father walks with us

Holy Week

5

Retreat for
Journeying through Lent
Everyone

Retreat for
The Father
Everyday



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Introduction and Programme

Introduction

We enter into the final week of retreat. Look toward taking part in the liturgies at Church this week. The Holy Week liturgies are filled with symbols and life. Evaluate for yourself how the retreat helped you. Perhaps you could write down what you experienced, the passages from Scripture that touched your life. Perhaps you could let others know of the experiences you have made.

Things that help

Choose one place to pray.

Choose a time and keep to it.

Invite others to share in your prayer.

Tip for the Week

Find out when the liturgies are in your Parish Church on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday. A great celebration is the Easter Vigil - give a try.

For further details please read the introduction in Book 1

Meditation

God Walks With Us

Holy Week is the most solemn of the Church's year. It takes us through the dramatic events of the life of Christ from his triumphant welcome as King into Jerusalem, his final teaching in the temple, his betrayal, the Last Supper with his disciples with the institution of the Eucharist and his Priesthood, the vigil of anguish in Gethsemane where he was joined by a few loyal friends, his arrest and show-trial where he was deserted and betrayed by his closest friends, his death on the cross, burial in the tomb and finally the reports of the women who had gone to tend to his body on the third day, that he was not there. He had risen. There are many ways in which we can say, what the coming of Jesus as a man tells us about God and his Plan for his creation. One thing we can say is that in the life and death of Jesus the God, who walks with us, is revealed. In the story of Holy Week we get to know the God who walks with us through our lives.

Cardinal Newman tells us that the God who goes with us knows us. He knows us for he made us. He knows the rising and falling of our spirits. The beating of our hearts and the breath in our bodies. He looks on our face to see if we are smiling or in tears. He has counted the hairs on our head and the height to which we have grown. He embraces us totally and takes us into his arms. This is the God who goes with us.

This God who goes with us, knows us. His knowledge is the interest of one who loves us. He is very much aware of all the goodness he has planted within our hearts. He knows the smallest things about us, our most touching moments, our darkest secrets and inmost fears. He recognises our strengths and weaknesses. He sees us as we stumble over our limitations. He smiles, as he looks on and sees us trying to overcome our weaknesses like a child's determined effort to stretch up and reach a shelf, just out

of it's reach.

Since this God knows us he understands much more than we can imagine and so he forgives! Forgiving means that the person knows that the other has done wrong - may even have hurt him. He knows that there is some level of injustice which has to be accepted, if forgiveness is to be possible. It may be that the offending person has no right whatsoever to being re accepted by the person who has been offended, shamed, ignored or abused. If we look into our own lives and our experience, we know how difficult it is to forgive. It means putting our hurt pride, wounded dignity, shunned emotions and sense of justice to one side. Changing our perspective is only possible if we have something stronger than justice. The God who forgives is no stranger to being hurt, wounded, shunned ignored:

“As many people were aghast at him. He had no form or charm to attract us, no beauty to win our hearts; he was despised, the lowest of men, a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering, one from whom, as it were, we averted our gaze, despised, for whom we had no regard.” (Isaiah 52, 13 - 53, 3)

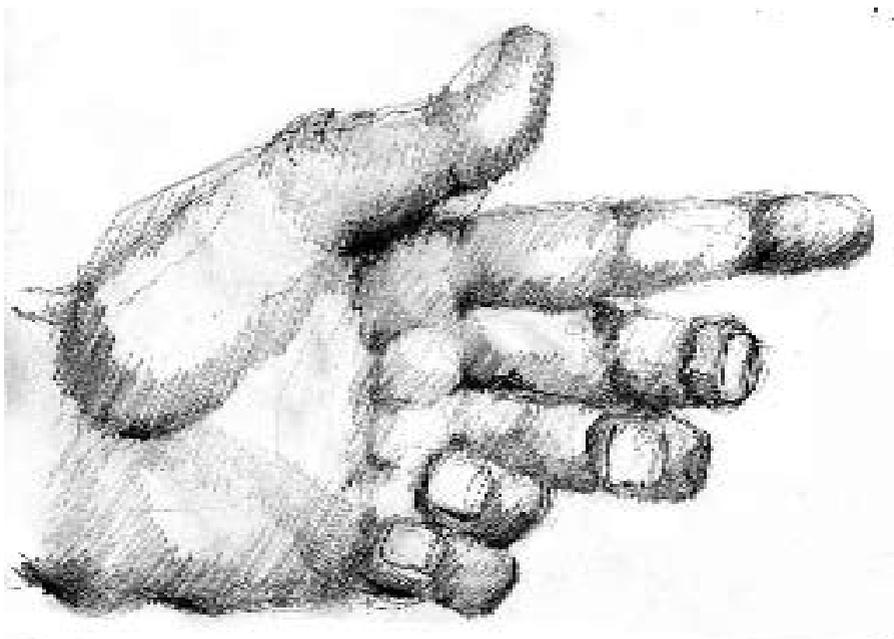
The depth of his love is revealed in the gifts he gave us: Jesus the Bread of Life, whose legacy was to remain with us, as we celebrate the Eucharist in memory of Him. Jesus who died for us on the Cross:

“Yet ours were the sufferings he was bearing, ours the sorrows he was caring, while we thought of him as someone being punished and struck with affliction by God; whereas he was being wounded for our rebellions, crushed because of our guilt; the punishment reconciling us fell on him, and we have been healed by his bruises.” (Isaiah 53, 4-5) Jesus who spent three days in the tomb and rose again to bring us new life.

Through Christ our image of God changes. As the God who walks with us, who knows life's joys and sufferings, he brings us into a new intimacy with God, who is our Father.

“Father, you are the source of life and being, the universe lies cupped within your hand; the angel hosts adore your endless glory, the whole creation follows your command. Yet you bowed down to fashion from earth’s surface a creature whom you willed to call your child; a creature for whose love in freedom given you dare to see your plan of love defied.

Father, your care surrounded my life’s dawning, when you stooped down and raised me as your child. Nor have you ceased through times of joy and sorrow to keep me safe and free me from all harm. Where would I be, my Father, had you left me to live my life whichever way I pleased? But you have used the storms and stress of living to form in me the image of your Son. Amen”



Story

God Walks With Us

The Story of loyalty to the Cross of Jesus

In the year 1856, archaeologists discovered on the Palatine Hill in Rome a very interesting site. They found the ruins of a garrison for Roman soldiers. On one of the walls in the largest room, they found the outline of a cross. The cross had been carved with some sharp object or with a knife. Underneath the cross there was the outline of a youth, holding up his hands to the cross in prayer. On the cross there was a man, but he had the head of a donkey. At the bottom were written the Greek words: Alexamenis sebete theon - which means: Alexamenos worships his God! It was a cartoon, a mockery, a joke-cross. The archaeologists believed that the buildings and the inscriptions must have come from the year 123 to 126 after Christ. The soldiers wanted to say that the Christian God is a donkey and whoever worships him is a donkey too.

In 1870, they discovered another set of rooms. In fact, it was a prison, adjacent to the garrison. And there on the wall, could be seen the clear answer of that youth Alexamenos. Scratched into the wall, underneath the Sign of the Cross, were the words: Alexamenos fidelis - Alexamenos will always remain faithful!

Sunday Liturgy

God Walks With Us

Greeting

Let us begin our prayer together.

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

Amen

Opening Prayer

Let us pray

God with us.

As Jesus entered into Jerusalem he was greeted by people proclaiming “Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest heavens!” Let us welcome Jesus into our lives this Lent. Let our love grow so that we will always experience God walking with us.

Amen

During this prayer a candle can be lit.

Gospel Reading

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord.

When they were approaching Jerusalem, in sight of Bethphage and Bethany, close by the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, ‘Go off to the village facing you, and as soon as you enter it you will find a tethered colt that no one has yet ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone says to you, “What are you doing?” say, “The Master needs it and will send it back here directly”.’ They went off and found a colt tethered near a door in the open street. As they untied it, some men standing there said, ‘What are you doing, untying that colt?’ They gave the answer Jesus had told them, and the men let them go. Then they took the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on its back, and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road,

others greenery which they had cut in the fields. And those who went in front and those who followed were all shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest heavens!'

Gospel Meditation

Take some time to think about the Gospel you have just heard. Perhaps the following questions might help you - but don't let them distract

- * When, and in what ways does God walk with you?*
- * Do you always walk with God, or do you wander away?*
- * What helps you to go back to God when you have wandered away?*

Time for Quiet

Personal Bidding Prayers

Jesus said where two or three are gathered in my name - I am with them. Gather all your prayers together either aloud or in the quiet of your own heart.

*Join your prayers with the prayers of Mary as you say-
Hail Mary, full of grace...*

Moment of Prayer

Choose one of the prayers from the collection on Page 14

Blessing Prayer

Father,

as we journey toward 2014

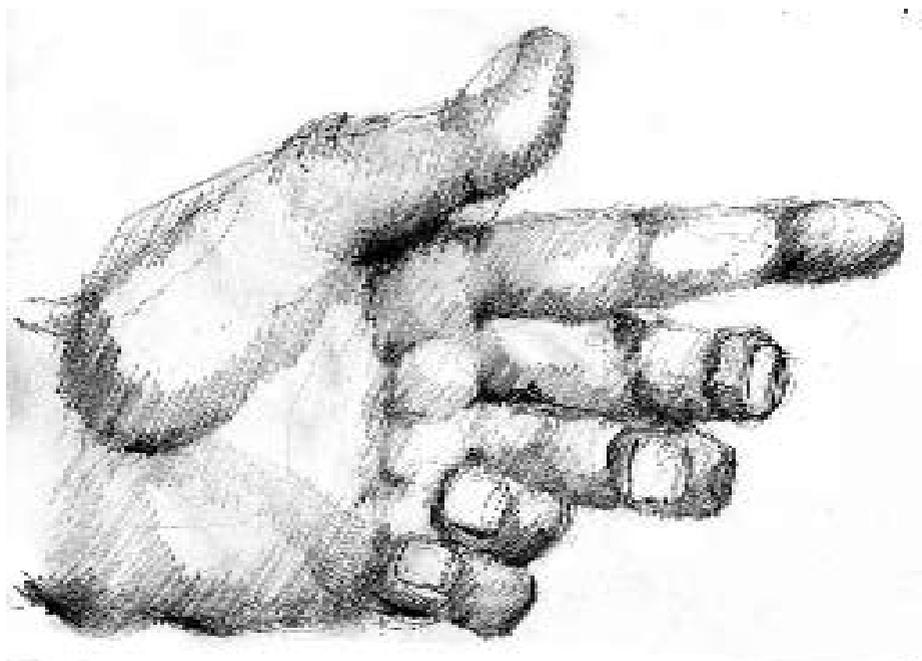
help us to remember that You are always close to us.

May we welcome You into our lives and homes this Lent.

Let us create a unique place where we can speak to You each day and gain the strength and confidence to live life with You.

Give us Your continued love, and help us to never lose faith.

In this Year of Grace may your Church grow through our prayer.
With Mary we journey in faith in our home where you are Lord,
living and reigning for ever and ever.
Amen.



Thoughts for the Week

God Walks With Us

Greeting

Let us begin our prayer together.

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

Amen

Opening Prayer

Let us pray

God with us.

As Jesus entered into Jerusalem he was greeted by people proclaiming “Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest heavens!” Let us welcome Jesus into our lives this Lent. Let our love grow so that we will always experience God walking with us.

Amen

Thought for the Week

Read the passage from scripture for the day. Spend some time in quiet. Gather all your prayers and offer them to God.

Blessing Prayer

Father,

as we journey toward 2014

help us to remember that You are always close to us.

May we welcome You into our lives and homes this Lent.

Let us create a unique place where we can speak to You each day and gain the strength and confidence to live life with You.

Give us Your continued love, and help us to never lose faith.

In this Year of Grace may your Church grow through our prayer.

With Mary we journey in faith in our home where you are Lord, living and reigning for ever and ever. Amen.

Monday of Holy Week - God who walks with us

Thus says God, the Lord... I have taken you by the hand and formed you; I have appointed you as covenant of the people and light of the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison, and those who live in darkness from the dungeon (Is 42,7)

Tuesday of Holy Week - God who knows us

Simon Peter said, 'Lord, where are you going? Jesus replied, 'Where I am going you cannot follow me now; you will follow me later.' Peter said to him, 'Why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.' 'Lay down your life for me?' answered Jesus. 'I tell you most solemnly, before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times'. (John 13,37-38)

Wednesday of Holy Week - God who forgives us

The Lord has opened my ear. For my part, I made no resistance, neither did I turn away. I offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who tore at my beard; I did not cover my face against insult and spittle. The Lord comes to my help, so that I am untouched by insults. (Is 50, 6-7)

Holy Thursday - Jesus Bread of Life

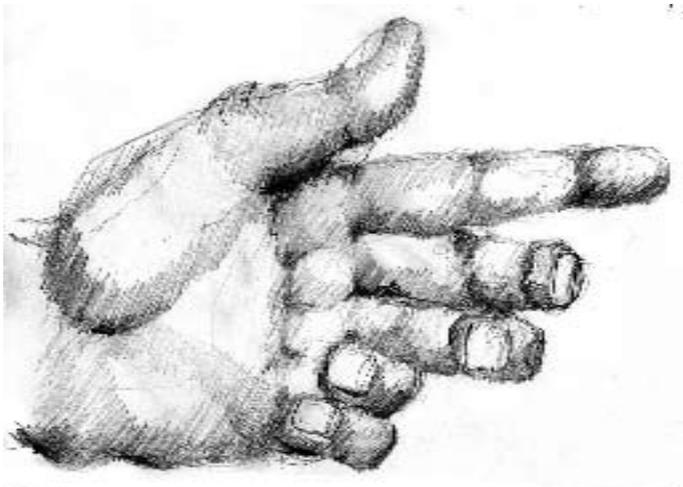
For this is what I received from the Lord, and in turn passed on to you: on the same night that he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread, and thanked God for it and broke it, and said, " This is my body, which is for you; do this as a memorial of me." (1Cor 11, 24)

Good Friday - Jesus Crucified Lord

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his Mother "Woman, this is your son." Then to the disciple he said, "This is your mother." And from that moment the disciple made a place for her in his home... After Jesus had taken the vinegar he said, "It is accomplished"; and bowing his head he gave up his spirit." (John 19, 20.24)

Holy Saturday - Jesus in the tomb

After this, Joseph of Arimathaea... Asked Pilate to let him remove the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission, so they came and took it away. Nicodemus came as well.. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, and following the Jewish burial custom. At the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in this garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been buried. Since it was the Jewish Day of Preparation and the tomb was near at hand, they laid Jesus there. (John 19, 40-42)



Common Prayers

God who walks with us

The Angelus

Leader: The Angel of the Lord declared to Mary:

All: And she conceived of the Holy Spirit

Hail Mary, etc.

Leader: Behold the handmaid of the Lord:

All: Be it done to me according to your word.

Hail Mary, etc.

Leader: And the Word was made Flesh:

All: And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, etc.

Leader: Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

All: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, your Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may be brought by his passion and cross to the glory of his resurrection, through the same Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Leader: May the divine assistance remain always with us + and may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

All: Amen.

Divine Praises

Blessed be God.
Blessed be his holy Name.
Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.
Blessed be the name of Jesus.
Blessed be his most Sacred Heart.
Blessed be his most Precious Blood.
Blessed be Jesus in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar.
Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.
Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.
Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception.
Blessed be her glorious Assumption.
Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.
Blessed be St Joseph, her spouse most chaste.
Blessed be God in his Angels and in his Saints

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me, Body of Christ, save me, Blood of Christ, inebriate me, Water from the side of Christ, wash me, Passion of Christ, strengthen me. O good Jesus, hear me. Within your wounds hide me. Let me not be separated from you, From malicious enemy defend me, In the hour of my death call me and bid me come to you, that with your saints I may praise you for ever and ever. Amen.

Pilgrimage Prayer 2014

Dear Mother and Mother of our Lord!
With great joy we start out on our pilgrimage to your shrine.

Father Kentenich's faith inspired you
to set up your home in Schoenstatt.
In the shadow of this shrine
a family was born,
a new spiritual way within the Church,
a charisma in the midst of our time.

Today we want to fill the jars with our gifts,
with our gratitude and repentance,
with our surrender and longing.
With every step we take on our pilgrim way we ask you:
Enkindle in us anew the fire of love for you,
for our father and for our family.
Mother, give us the strength to spread a covenant culture in our world
today
and educate us to be your true missionaries for this century.

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