Prayer Service

Good Friday Prayer Service

Opening Prayer:
Leader:
I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
my mouth is dried up like a potsherd
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs are all around me;
a company of evildoers encircles me.
My hands and feet have shriveled;
I can count all my bones.
They stare and gloat over me;
they divide my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.

But you, O Lord, do not be far away!
O my help, come quickly to my aid!
Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life from the power of the dog!
Save me from the mouth of the lion!
Psalm 22:14-21

Group Prayer: (Each group member should read one Paragraph.)
Holy God,
holy and strange,
holy and intimate,
have mercy on us.

O my people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you?
Answer me.

I brooded over the abyss,
with my words I called forth creation:
but you have brooded on destruction,
and manufactured the means of chaos.

O my people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you?
Answer me.

I breathed life into your bodes,
and carried you tenderly in my arms:
but you have armed yourselves for war,
breathing out threats of violence.

O my people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you?
Answer me.

I made the desert blossom before you,
I fed you with an open hand:
but you have grasped the children’s food,
and laid waste fertile lands.

O my people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you?
Answer me.

But you, O Lord, do not be far away!
O my help, come quickly to my aid!
Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life from the power of the dog!

Holy God,
holy and strange,
holy and intimate,
have mercy on us.

I would have gathered you to me as a lover,
and shown you the ways of peace:
but you have desired security,
and you would not surrender your self.

O my people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you?
Answer me.

I have torn the veil of my glory,
transfiguring the earth:
but you have disfigured my beauty,
and turned away your face.

O my people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you?
Answer me.

I have labored to deliver you,
as a woman delights to give life:
but you have delighted in bloodshed,
and labored to bereave the world.
Good Friday Prayer Service (continued)

O my people, what have I done to you?
How have I offended you?
Answer me.

I have followed you with the power of my spirit,
to seek truth and heal the oppressed:
but you have been following a lie,
and returned to your own comfort.

Holy God,
holy and strange,
holy and Intimate,
have mercy on us.
John 16:20-22

All:
Hands like these
Were hammered on the tree.
Feet like our feet
Were pierced.
A head like our head
Bore the shameful thorns.
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Brief Period of Silence

Reading and Reflection

Reader 1:
Structures of sin are rooted in personal sin, and thus always
linked to the concrete acts of individuals who introduce
these structures, consolidate them and make them difficult
to remove. And thus they grow stronger, spread, and
become the source of other sins, and so influence people’s behavior.

Reader 2:
These attitudes and “structures of sin” are only conquered—
presupposing the help of divine grace—by a diametrically
opposed attitude: a commitment to the good of one’s
neighbor with the readiness, in the gospel sense, to “lose oneself” for the sake of the other instead of exploiting him,
and to “serve him” instead of oppressing him for one’s own advantage.

Reader 3:
Solidarity helps us to see the “other”—whether a person,
people, or nation—not just as some kind of instrument, with
a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low
cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our
“neighbor,” a “helper” (cf. Gen. 2:189720), to be made a
sharer, on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to
which all are equally invited by God: Hence the importance
of reawakening the religious awareness of individuals and peoples.

Reader 4:
Thus the exploitation, oppression, and annihilation of others
are excluded. These facts, in the present division of the
world into opposing blocs, combine to produce the danger
of war and an excessive preoccupation with personal
security, often to the detriment of the autonomy, freedom of
decision, and even the territorial integrity of the weaker
nations situated within the so-called “areas of influence” or
“safety belts.”

Reader 5:
The “structures of sin” and the sins which they produce are
likewise radically opposed to peace and development, for
development, in the familiar expression of Pope Paul’s
encyclical, is “the new name for peace.”

Reader 6:
In this way, the solidarity which we propose is the path to
peace and at the same time to development. For world peace
is inconceivable unless the world’s leaders come to recog-
nize that interdependence in itself demands . . . the sacrifice
of all forms of economic, military, or political imperialism
and the transformation of mutual distrust into collaboration.
This is precisely the act proper to solidarity among individu-
als and nations.

Reader 7:
The goal of peace, so desired by everyone, will certainly be
achieved through the putting into effect of social and
international justice, but also through the practice of the
virtues which favor togetherness, and which teach us to live
in unity, so as to build in unity, by giving and receiving, a
new society and a better world.

Period of Silence (5-10 minutes)
Litany for Peace

Reader 1: Lord Jesus, by your cross and resurrection
All: deliver us

By your witness to the truth
deliver us

By your passion and death
deliver us

by your victory over the grave
deliver us

from the desire for power
deliver us

from the conspiracy of silence
deliver us

from the worship of weapons
deliver us

from the slaughter of the peoples
deliver us

from the nightmare of hunger
deliver us

from peace that is no peace
deliver us

from security that is no security
deliver us

Second Reader: By the light of the gospel
All: give us peace

by the good news for the poor
give us peace

by your healing of our wounds
give us peace

by faith in your word
give us peace

by hunger and thirst for justice
give us peace

by the coming of the Kingdom
give us peace

All: Amen.