

THURSDAY AGAPE

EVENING PRAYER (VESPERS)
THURSDAY, WEEK 1
LENT

Wash away the stain of our sins, make us live in your presence our whole life long, and bring us to the inheritance you have promised. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. *All: Amen.*

Priest: The Lord bless us, and keep us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. *All: Amen*

“Scripture” Readings for Silent Meditation

1. The arrest of Jesus: John 18:1-9.

“I AM HE.” These words are the basis of His arrest, trial, condemnation and execution. In their serene and solid strength, He faces everything to come. For Judas, Jesus was an “IT” not a “HE.” Jesus must face so many deficient human beings. In my sufferings and death, I am called to do the same. My “I am” stands rooted in His “I AM HE.” These words are not a cold, defensive refuge, but are the flame of the burning bush, the flame of the living God, of love stronger than death. It is an “agapic” flame. It empowers me to face my own passion, suffering and death with divine serenity.

2. The death of Jesus: John 19:28-30.

“IT IS ACCOMPLISHED.” What? The Will of the Father. Thy will be done on my earth; not my will but thine be done. For this, He had the mind of the Father. He emptied Himself of His own will and mind, to be filled with those of His Father. Ours is to be filled with the grace of the Father’s will by having the mind of the Son. The “I AM HE” spoken at the beginning, the arrest, is like an open structure which is fleshed out to the full in “IT IS ACCOMPLISHED.”

3. Isaiah’s Prophecy fulfilled: Is. 53:4-5.

Our wounds are His; His are ours. He heals us where we are wounded, not where we are not. Our shame becomes our glory by virtue of His passion and compassion. It is precisely in our shame that we have deepest communion with Him and with each other. What I most detest about myself is transformed into the means of saving union with Him. He thus draws me to humility, to glory in my weaknesses for there His crucified power reveals itself. It is the power of the I AM in my brokenness. This is the Father’s will. The I AM accomplishes my healing in agapic self-outpouring.

Introduction (All stand)

Priest: O God, come to our aid.

People: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Priest: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

People: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Hymn

God, of thy pity, unto us thy children
Bend down thine ear in thine own loving kindness,
And all thy people’s prayers and vows ascending
Hear, we beseech thee.

Look down in mercy from thy seat of glory,
Pour on our souls the radiance of thy presence,
Drive from our weary hearts the shades of darkness,
Lightening our footsteps.

Free us from sin by might of thy great loving,
Cleanse thou the sordid, loose the fettered spirit,
Spare every sinner, raise with thine own right hand
All who are fallen.

Glory to God the Father everlasting,
Glory for ever to the Sole-begotten,
With whom thy Holy Spirit through the ages
Reigneth co-equal.

Psalms and Canticle (All sit)

Psalm 29 (30)
Thanksgiving for rescue from death

“Christ gives thanks to his Father after his glorious resurrection” (Cassian).

Priest: Lord, I cried to you for help and you have healed me: I will thank you for ever.

Men: I will praise you, Lord, you have rescued me
and have not let my enemies rejoice over me.

Women: O Lord, I cried to you for help
and you, my God, have healed me.
O Lord, you have raised my soul from the dead,
restored me to life from those who sink into the grave.

Sing psalms to the Lord, you who love him,
give thanks to his holy name.
His anger lasts a moment; his favour all through life.
At night there are tears, but joy comes with dawn.

I said to myself in my good fortune:
‘Nothing will ever disturb me.’
Your favour had set me on a mountain fastness,
then you hid your face and I was put to confusion.

To you, Lord, I cried,
to my God I made appeal:
‘What profit would my death be, my going to the grave?
Can dust give you praise or proclaim your truth?’

The Lord listened and had pity.
The Lord came to my help.
For me you have changed my mourning into dancing,
you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.
So my soul sings psalms to you unceasingly.
O Lord my God, I will thank you for ever.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

Glory be to the Father and *to* the Son and to the *Ho*-ly Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and e-*ver* shall be, world without *end*.
Amen.

All: ‘You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham!’ – ‘I tell you most solemnly, before Abraham ever was, I am.’

Prayers and intercessions

Priest: Let us pray to Christ the Lord, who gave us the new commandment to love one another.

All: Lord, may your people grow in love.

Priest: Good master, teach us to love you in our fellow men, teach us to serve you in our brothers.

All: Lord, may your people grow in love.

Priest: You interceded with the Father for those who nailed you to the cross; help us to love our enemies and pray for those who injure us.

All: Lord, may your people grow in love.

Priest: Through the mystery of your body and blood deepen our courage and faith, strengthen the weak, comfort the sorrowful and fill the dying with new hope.

All: Lord, may your people grow in love.

Priest: Light of the world, you gave sight to the man born blind; enlighten men in baptism through the washing in water and the word of life.

All: Lord, may your people grow in love.

Priest: Grant to the dead your everlasting love; count us among the chosen of God.

All: Lord, may your people grow in love.

Our Father

Priest: Stand by your people, Lord, who place all their trust in your mercy.

Priest: I said: 'Lord, have mercy on me.'

All: I said: 'Lord, have mercy on me.'

Priest: 'Heal my soul, for I have sinned against you.'

All: I said: 'Lord, have mercy on me.'

Priest: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

All: I said: 'Lord, have mercy on me.'

Canticle (*All stand*)

Magnificat

My soul rejoices in the Lord

Priest: 'You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham!' – 'I tell you most solemnly, before Abraham ever was, I am.'

Women: My soul glori-fies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The Almighty works mar-vels for me.
Ho-ly his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.

He puts forth his arm in strength
and scatters the proud-hearted.
He casts the mighty from their thrones
and rai-ses the lowly.

He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich a-way empty.

He protects Isra-el, his servant,
Remembe-ring his mercy,

the mercy promised to our fathers,
to Abraham and his sons for ever.

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

All: Lord, I cried to you for help and you have healed me: I will thank you for ever.

Psalm 31 (32)
The joy of the forgiven

**“David says that a man is blessed if God considers him righteous,
irrespective of good deeds” (Rom 4:6).**

Priest: Happy the man to whom the Lord imputes no guilt.

Women: Happy the man whose offence is forgiven,
whose sin is remitted.
O happy the man to whom the Lord
imputes no guilt,
in whose spirit is no guile.

I kept it secret and my frame was wasted.
I groaned all day long,
for night and day your hand
was heavy upon me.
Indeed my strength was dried up
as by the summer's heat.

But now I have acknowledged my sins;
my guilt I did not hide.
I said: 'I will confess
my offence to the Lord.'
And you, Lord, have forgiven
the guilt of my sin.

So let every good man pray to you
in the time of need.
The floods of water may reach high
but him they shall not reach.
You are my hiding place, O Lord;

you save me from distress.
You surround me with cries of deliverance.

I will instruct you and teach you
the way you should go;
I will give you counsel
with my eye upon you.

Be not like horse and mule, unintelligent,
needing bridle and bit,
else they will not approach you.
Many sorrows has the wicked
but he who trusts in the Lord,
loving mercy surrounds him.

Rejoice, rejoice in the Lord,
exult, you just!
O come, ring out your joy,
all you upright of heart.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

All: Happy the man to whom the Lord imputes no guilt.

Canticle

The Judgement

Apocalypse 11

Priest: The Lord has given him power and honour and empire, and all peoples will serve him.

*Women: We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
who are and who were,
that you have taken your great power
and begun to reign.*

The nations raged,
but your wrath came,
and the time for the dead to be judged,
for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints,
and those who fear your name,
both small and great.

Now the salvation and the power
and the kingdom of our God
and the authority of his Christ have come,
for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down,
who accuses them day and night before our God.

And they have conquered him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony,
for they loved not their lives even unto death.
Rejoice, then, O heaven,
and you that dwell therein.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

All: The Lord has given him power and honour and empire, and all peoples will serve him.

Short Reading

Hebrews 13:12-15

Jesus suffered outside the gate to sanctify the people with his own blood. Let us go to him, then, 'outside the camp', and share his degradation. For there is no eternal city for us in this life but we look for one in the life to come. Through him, let us offer God an unending sacrifice of praise, a verbal sacrifice that is offered every time we acknowledge his name.

Short Responsory