

EASTER DAY

Baptismal water is a symbolic death. 'We give you thanks that through the deep waters of death Jesus delivered us from our sins and was raised to new life in triumph'. APBA p. 58. We pray today that as we were 'so buried with Christ in baptism that the new nature may be raised up in us [and] the fruit of [God's] Spirit grow and flourish in us.' APBA p. 57.

God of terror and joy, you arise to shake the earth. Open our graves and give us back the past; so that all that has been buried may be freed and forgiven, and our lives may return to you through the risen Christ. Amen.

People of Grace, you cannot hide
the good news Jesus came to bring.

You witness to the one who died
yet lives to transform everything.

People of Grace, you must not
hoard the riches the Spirit sends,
but pass them on, and spread the word
that God's abundance never ends.

People of Grace, the life you live
is celebration, thanks and praise.

You are forgiven! Now, forgive,
and love, and share God's wide embrace.

Songs for a Hopeful Church No 40 Elizabeth J Smith suggested music Truro (AHB 33) Used with permission

Collects are from Janet Morley *All Desires Known: Expended Edition*. SPCK, 1992

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AMUA LENT AND EASTER PRAYER LEAFLET—2021

Journeying through Lent and Easter with our Baptismal Promises. We 21st century Christians inherit practices of worship. The earliest account of Lent and Easter we have are from Egeria. This European woman was an intrepid traveller intent on visiting Christian and Hebrew sites and observing the rituals in the 380's! Egeria provides the earliest account of a Christian pilgrimage and a first-hand account of the liturgical practices many Christian use today and which were just being accepted universally.

Egeria stayed three years in Jerusalem and made excursions to sites associated with Christ's ministry. On her way back to Europe she stopped at Hagia Thekla, the shrine of Saint Thecla near Seleucia Isauriae (modern Silifke, Turkey), particularly venerated by women. Her letters were addressed to her 'dear ladies', the women of her spiritual community back home.

Baptismal Promises were developed in a similar way to other liturgical practices – with Scripture, Tradition and Reason.

Anglicans are familiar with those prescribed in the Prayer Book.

In the *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) 1662 candidates are asked to:

1. renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh .
2. believe all the articles of the Christian faith.
3. keep God's holy will and walk in the same.

In *A Prayer Book for Australia* (APBA) 1996 candidates are asked will they

1. Turn to Christ
2. Repents of their sins
3. reject selfish living and all that is false and unjust
4. renounce Satan and all evil
5. affirm as theirs the faith of the church by saying the Apostle's Creed set out in three questions – Do you believe in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit?

Our task for the next six weeks is to explore these promises, which when seriously considered is not a simple nor easy undertaking.

Hymn sung through the six weeks of Lent.

Lord Jesus, think on me AHB 122; TiS 456; NEH 70

LENT 1 —Forty days and forty nights.

Read Mark 1: 12-13.

Mark tells us that immediately after Jesus had received baptism (cleansing, repentance) from John and God's voice was heard declaring him 'Beloved Son', he is driven into the desert. One would think that after such affirming and spiritually cleansing that Jesus' ministry was 'ready to go'. But no! Such affirmations really give courage and preparation for the striving that LIFE requires. There's to be no sitting back on our laurels but in terms of St Benedict, 'continual conversion of life'.

Say the Baptismal promises out loud:

BCP: 'I renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.'

APBA: 'I renounce Satan and all evil.'

Being driven also suggests reluctance, force even. Vanity, pomp's: think honestly what that means for you. How important is your position? Identify what you really love?

Collect.

Spirit of integrity, you drive us into the desert to search out our truth.

Give us clarity to know what is right, and courage to reject what is strategic;

*That we may abandon the false innocence of failing to choose at all, but may follow the purposes of Jesus Christ. **Amen.***

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Read John 13: 1-15

Our Lord Jesus prepares his disciples for a ministry of service not success. Those who want to climb on the back of worldly pomp are brought to a place of reckoning. Glory is not measured by numbers, property, or possessions.

Collect

Christ, whose feet were caressed with perfume and a woman's hair; you humbly took basin and towel and washed the feet of your friends.

*Wash us also in your tenderness as we touch one another: that embracing your service freely, we may accept no other bondage in your name. **Amen***

GOOD FRIDAY

Read Isaiah 52:13 – 53-end.

Keep Good Friday, keep it quietly, give space for meditating on the long passage from Isaiah with its familiar phrases. Feel the impact of a sustained reading. Notice how the repetition of disgrace, infamy, disfigurement feels. A man of sorrows indeed.

Collect

*Christ our victim, whose beauty was disfigured and whose body torn upon the cross; open wide your arms to embrace our tortured world, that we may not turn away our eyes, but abandon ourselves to your mercy. **Amen.***

PASSION/PALM SUNDAY

Say the Baptismal promises out loud:
APBA 'I repent of my sins.'

Read Luke 19: 28-40

In your imagination begin your entry into Jerusalem. Be with the crowd that cheered only to fall away. Be with Jesus' friends who proudly walked beside him while he was 'successful'. Remember the church was born of disgrace, rejection and failure while you walk the Way of Sorrows this Holy Week.

Collect

God, our hope of victory whom we constantly betray; grant us so to recognise your coming that in our clamour there may be commitment, and in our silence the very stones may cry aloud in your name. Amen

ON MONDAY, TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK READ THE PASSION NARRATIVES IN THE GOSPELS.

If you have trouble reading ask someone else to read for you. Even a few verses at a time, from a few people who pop in.

Matthew 26:36 – 27:55; Mark 14: 32 – 15: 41; Luke 22: 39 – 23: 49; John 18:1 – 19:37. If you still have a Book of Common Prayer you will find the readings already set out for those days.

LENT 2

Say the Baptismal promises out loud:

APBA 'I reject selfish living and all that is false and unjust'.

Read 1 John 4: 1-6

We are facing the second week in the desert with Christ. Take time to consider devilish works and make some judgements. This is never a simple process because our inclinations are to rely on what we have always believed, to simplify the complex, to see ourselves as committed to Christ and therefore what we think or feel is always right.

Collect.

Spirit of truth and judgement, who alone can exorcise the powers that grip our world;

At the point of crisis give us your discernment, that we may accurately name what is evil,

And know the way that leads to peace. Amen

LENT 3

Say the Baptismal promises out loud: APBA 'I turn to Christ.'

Read Mark 8: 27-end.

Let us reassess. Who do we think we are turning to? It is such an important question. Again and again in Mark's gospel folk ask, who is this? Jesus himself asks his disciples, 'Who do people think I am?' The call to, and challenge of, discipleship is how to properly confess Jesus as Messiah. We need a proper understanding of his radical ministry and self-giving. Discipleship is being Christ for others.

Collect.

Jesus our brother, you followed the necessary path and were broken on our behalf.

May we neither cling to our pain where it is futile, nor refuse to embrace the cost when it is required of us: that in losing ourselves for your sake, we may be brought to new life. Amen

LENT 4 Mothering Sunday

Say the Baptismal promises out loud:

BCP 'I will keep God's holy will and walk in the same.'

Read Isaiah 46: 3-4

Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age I am he, even when you turn grey I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save. (NRSV)

The fourth Sunday in Lent is traditionally a rest from our fast. Perhaps you have chosen to fast from gossiping this year or being negative about the morals of the young and the not-so-young. A verse from the hymn, *My God how wonderful thou art* will help us put God's will into perspective and so remember Love as the great power of the Almighty.

No earthly father loves like thee,
no mother half so mild,
bears and forbears, as thou hast done
With me, thy sinful child. (v.6 AHB 71)

Collect.

*God our mother, you hold our life within you,
nourish us at your breast, and teach us to walk alone.
Help us so to receive your tenderness and respond to your challenge
that others may draw life from us, in your name. Amen.*

LENT 5

Say the Baptismal promises out loud:

BCP 'I believe the articles of the faith.'

APBA 'Affirm as yours the faith of the church [*set out in the Apostle's Creed*] – I believe in God the Father, I believe God the Son, I believe God the Holy Spirit'

Read Mark 10: 35-45

Ambition and jealousy are so very destructive – of relationships, families, organisations of every size and purpose, and all of these are particularly so in the Church. When feelings run strong, they are generally fuelled by a difference of opinion. The 39 Articles referred to in the baptismal promises in the BCP are an example, but it can also apply to the Creed as set out in APBA. The creeds were written in response to a chaos of opposing opinions. They set a communal standard so that WE can say 'I believe' with Love for Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Because we can't and don't know everything about God. Because Faith accepts.

Collect

*Christ our Lord, you refused the way of domination and died the death of a slave. May we also refuse to lord it over those who are subject to us,
but share the weight of authority so that all may be empowered in your name. Amen.*