



Discipleship Resources Lent 2019

Reflection on
being a disciple
by Bishop
Patrick

5 Week Programme
exploring Pope Francis'
Apostolic Exhortation
on the Call to Holiness

Ideas and Suggestions for
Stations of the Cross
Reconciliation Services
Lenten Prayer Life

CONTENTS

Discipleship Reflection by Bishop Patrick McKinney	1
Introduction to the resource	3
Rejoice and be Glad.....	4
First session of a 5-week programme exploring Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation on the Call to Holiness	
Repent and Believe in the Good News - Reconciliation Services	10
• Sorrowful Mysteries	
• Beatitudes	
Prayer Life of a Disciple	10
• Morning and Evening Prayer	
• Examen Prayer	
• Stations of the Cross	
Discipleship and Lent	11
• Lenten commitments and suggestions	
• Ways to engage with being a disciple in Lent	
Recommitment to Discipleship - preparing to renew our Baptismal Promises	13
Appendices	16

DISCIPLESHIP

I warmly commend to you these excellent Lenten resources for our diocesan parishes and chaplaincies. The diocesan theme we are reflecting upon this Lent is 'Discipleship'.

So, what's involved in being a disciple of Christ Jesus? I offer just a few thoughts. The first essential element is, as we've reflected upon in Advent, time spent with Christ, so as to discover both his love for each one of us and his desire that we each grow in our relationship with him (Encounter). It's interesting that John begins his gospel with the account of Jesus inviting the two disciples of John the Baptist to come and spend time with him (John 1: 36-39). It points us to the truth that it's as a consequence of time spent with Jesus that we come to discover more and more, both who he is and what he is asking of each of us; how he wants us to follow in his footsteps, to be his disciples. Christ Jesus is constantly asking us to be his disciples, his co-workers, in and through the ordinary daily circumstances of our lives, in our home, our parish, our place of work and our wider neighbourhood. St Teresa of Avila expressed this beautifully when she said,

'Christ has no body on earth now but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours; yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on the world; yours are the feet with which he walks to do good; yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.'

So, a disciple is someone who wishes, not only to grow in their relationship with Christ but also to be used by Christ as a way in which his love, care, compassion, healing and forgiveness can be shared with others. The disciple is someone who is trying each day to move from a 'me-centred' relationship with Christ to one that seeks to hear and respond to what Christ may be asking of him/her: 'Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will' (Psalm 40). David Wells told us, in the recent session we had with him on Discipleship & Missionary Discipleship, of how a young woman, committed to the idea of being Christ's disciple, would say each morning this simple prayer: 'What are we going to do today, Lord?' and then she asked Christ to help her to see that day, with his eyes, little opportunities when she could put her discipleship into action. So, for example, as she travelled in on the tube to work she would say a little prayer for the people sitting or standing immediately around her; that God would bless their day; that they might come to know how much Christ loved each of them. These Lenten resources offer an 'Examen', a short reflection for the end of each day; a time to examine how we have each responded to Christ's invitation to be his disciples, to be his hands, his feet, his eyes, throughout the day, and an opportunity to ask the Lord's mercy and his help to respond better as his disciples next day.

A disciple is also someone who knows that that he/she often falls short of what Christ wants for them. The Season of Lent is a time of renewal; we begin on Ash Wednesday with the invitation to 'Repent and believe the Gospel', and throughout Lent we are encouraged to acknowledge that there are things in all of our lives that we need to let go of, because they prevent us from being the disciple that Christ is calling us to be. So, disciples of Christ are grateful and frequent recipients of God's merciful forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, so that they in turn may become instruments of Christ's mercy and forgiveness to others. Fasting and Almsgiving, especially during Lent, are other good ways to put our faith into action; to put what we have into God's service by offering it up for the benefit of others. And at the end of Lent, at Easter, in the Renewal of Baptismal Promises, we are then given the opportunity to recommit ourselves as disciples. There is a helpful resource in this pack to help us prepare more intentionally to renew our baptismal promises.

A disciple is also one who is called to holiness of life, by drawing closer to God, who alone is holy and so is the source of holiness: 'Be holy for I am holy' (Leviticus 11: 44). Pope Francis has reminded us, in his Exhortation 'Gaudete et Exsultate' that, in and through our baptism, and through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all of us are called by God to holiness of life. The Exhortation is very easy to read and most encouraging, and it would be a good document to study together during Lent. This parish resource pack offers helpful guidelines as to how this might be done in a parish or chaplaincy setting.

These excellent resources support all the points I have just made about discipleship, so I would encourage you to make imaginative use of them, to judge how best they can be used in your setting. There is also a very helpful Lent Homily Support Pack with ideas on how to preach on discipleship during this season. I hope that all of this material will help ensure that, throughout this Season of Lent, the focus of all that is going on in your parish and chaplaincy is very much on helping people of all ages to grow in their understanding of and the living out of Christian discipleship. Please remember that over the next three Lenten Seasons we shall be steadily deepening our understanding of discipleship, so we don't have to do everything this Lent!

May this Lent be a most fruitful time of discipleship in your parish or chaplaincy,

With much prayer,

+ Patrick

Bishop Patrick

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE PACK

This resource is intended to help spark ideas of how you can help all members of your parish community grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. When we look at the scriptures we find that after people encounter Christ, he invites them to follow him. Discipleship is not just a case of following as an observer, but it is an active choice to have your life transformed, to have your way of thinking, loving and acting changed. It is us allowing Christ to live in us. We are called each and every day to be transformed by the Holy Spirit, to be more and more like Jesus, so that we live as Jesus did in and through the heart of the Father.

This resource looks at different aspects of discipleship: the call to holiness; being reconciled to Christ; and the Lenten spiritual practices of Fasting, Prayer and Almsgiving.

The first section focusses on the call to holiness. Last March, in the middle of Lent, Pope Francis produced an Apostolic Exhortation on the call to holiness. Lent seems an appropriate time to study it. The call to holiness is the primary vocation of all Christians, it is the essence of being a disciple. A programme examining and reflecting on this document can be a great way to discover or rediscover our calling as disciples. It can also feed into the desire to do something extra in Lent.

The next section to be considered is Reconciliation. When we answer the call to be a disciple we must turn away from the behaviours, attitudes and actions that draw us away from Christ. We must be repentant and turn to him who takes all our sins away. The transformation of our exterior action is naught if internally we are still orientated away from God or harbour any barriers to his love for us.

The following sections on prayer and Lent and Discipleship build on the previous two. Each section gives an outline of ideas about how we can explicitly link each Lenten spiritual practice to helping us to grow as disciples in and of Christ. In the appendices there are several sample texts for various services and liturgies that can be adapted.

We pray that this Lent will be a fruitful and blessed time for each and every person in your community to answer the beautiful and joyful call to discipleship.

REJOICE AND BE GLAD
A 5 WEEK EXPLORATION OF POPE FRANCIS'
APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION ON THE CALL TO HOLINESS.

Given here is the first session of the programme, the full programme will follow. With each section is a reflection on the text from the chapter, feel free to replace it with a talk from a parish catechist, member of the clergy or any parishioner who has thoughts on this chapter.

Aim of the programme

The aim of this programme is to help people explore Pope Francis renewed focus on the universal call to holiness. As the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council remind us in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 'all the faithful of Christ are invited to strive for the holiness and perfection of their own proper state. Indeed, they have an obligation to so strive.' (LG 42)

Through prayer, discussion, catechesis and reflection it is our hope that each person will have the opportunity to examine how our Lord is personally calling them to a life of holiness and how they are going to intentional respond to it.

It is recommended that each session contains a sustained time of prayer. This could be a Liturgy of the Word, the Rosary or a time of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. This is so that we begin our time of reflection in God's presence who not only calls us to holiness but equips us to answer this call also. Given in this document are some suggested scripture readings, hymns, intercessory prayers and collects. It is not expected or suggested that all of these should be used in the time of prayer in your session.

It is also recommended that those partaking in the course read the chapter before the parish/chaplaincy meeting on it. It can be ordered through CTS here:

<http://www.ctsbooks.org/gaudete-et-exsultate-2>

Or read for free on or downloaded from the Vatican website here:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html

SESSION 01: HEROES

Exploring Chapter 1 - the Call to Holiness

Time of Prayer

Suggested Hymns and Music:

- *Since Your Love* - United Pursuit
- *Open the Eyes of my Heart Lord* - Paul Baloche
- *Everlasting God* - Chris Tomlin
- *The Church's One Foundation* - Samuel John Stone
- *For all the Saints* - Ralph Vaughan Williams
- *City of God* - Daniel L. Schutte

Suggested Mysteries of the Rosary:

- Joyful - as it explores the family life of Jesus

Suggested readings:

- 2 Timothy 1:1-6
- Jeremiah 1:1-10
- Luke 5:1-11

Suggested Collects:

Loving Lord, in your incarnation you put before us the pattern of holiness. In the witness of the saints and martyrs you have shown how we also can answer the call to be perfect as our heavenly father is perfect. In our prayer, study and discussion today, help us to know how we also can answer your call to holiness in our daily lives. Amen

or

Holy Lord and Father, you sent your Son to earth to open the way to holiness and by his life, death and resurrection free us from all sin. Pour upon us your Holy Spirit so filled your power and strength we may answer Your Son's call to be his disciple. Amen

Suggested Intercessory prayers:

1) Penitential Prayers

Leader: Lord Jesus you lived a fully human life in every way but sin, Lord have mercy.

Response: Lord have mercy

Leader: Lord Jesus you fully embraced your cross and did not flee from your call, Christ have mercy.

Response: Christ have mercy

Leader: Lord Jesus, your death, resurrection and ascension restored to us the dignity and holiness that had been forfeited by humanity. Lord have mercy.

Response: Lord have mercy

2) Bidding Prayers

Leader: We pray for Pope Francis, Bishop Patrick and all the clergy, may their ministry and daily service to the Church be for us the greatest example of Christ's love for us. For them we pray;

Response: Make them holy Lord

Leader: We pray for our politicians and all leaders. We ask our heavenly king to bestow on them the gifts to rule on earth as he does in heaven. For them we pray;

Response: Make them holy Lord

Leader: We pray for the sick, that they may see in their suffering and pain a unity with the saving passion of Jesus. For them we pray;

Response: Make them holy Lord

Leader: We pray for ourselves, that we will be able to see the joy that comes from pursuing holiness as a disciple of Christ, and never tire of seeking this daily. For us we pray;

Response: Make us holy Lord.

After the time of prayer, it is advised to have a short social and refreshment time, make sure everyone knows one another.

Starter Question to discuss

Who were your heroes growing up? Who did you have on posters on your bedroom wall or aspire to be?

Reflection

Pope Francis begins chapter one in the same way we have our session looking at inspirations. The lives of the saints are so inspiring and fill us with awe, if that is their simplicity of life, their unwavering faith, their incredible wisdom or their astonishing miracles. St Ignatius of Loyola was converted by just reading the lives of the saints. It was the stories of their lives and how they had answered the call to holiness that led him to seek holiness; to seek to be a disciple, a friend, of Jesus.

The great difference between the footballers or musicians who adorned our walls as children is that the saints not only inspire us but they encourage and accompany us on the road to holiness. The image or example of our childhood heroes were phantoms, always allusive, never present in our lives. The saints, though invisible to our senses, are ever present in our lives, not just to blaze a trail for us to follow but to walk ever beside us praying for us to open more of our hearts and lives to God's call. Pope Francis quotes his predecessor, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, in his first

homily as Pope in 2005: 'Each of us can say: "Surrounded, led and guided by the friends of God... I do not have to carry alone what, in truth, I could never carry alone. All the saints of God are there to protect me, to sustain me and to carry me".' (GEE 4) The saints are not venerated for their own glory they are venerated for the glory of God and the help of our salvation. Their continuous intercession sustains and empowers along our journey of faith, ever ready to shoulder our yoke with us.

The next section of chapter 1 builds on the last as the Holy Father draws our attention to what he calls *The Saints Next Door*. He draws upon the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council's teaching that we are not saved as individuals but as a people bonded together (LG 9): 'In salvation history, the Lord saved one people. We are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people. That is why no one is saved alone, as an isolated individual. Rather, God draws us to himself, taking into account the complex fabric of interpersonal relationships present in a human community. God wanted to enter into the life and history of a people.' Humans desire community, it is imparted in our hearts and souls, by our creator he is at once a community of persons yet one divine being. Pope Francis stresses the importance of the witness and fraternity of our family and friends, our brothers and sisters in Christ, in helping us pursue holiness. When we delve into the lives of the saints, it is clear to see that these great men and women did not battle on alone. It is common to hear their connection to other canonised saints. When we consider the close friendships of St Francis and St Clare; St Ignatius of Loyola and St Francis Xavier; St Thérèse of Lisieux and her parents St Louis and Marie-Azélie Marti, this is obvious but so often there are short meetings, encounters or distant contact between these holy people that sees them encouraging one another in holiness. So we also are surrounded in our pews, homes and daily experiences by those saints who encourage and strengthen us as we strengthen and encourage them in following Jesus. A man is not an island, and a saint can never be a saint in isolation. It is important for us to recognise and explore the great example and witness of the saints we know in our lives.

The Holy Father, having established that we can see and be inspired by the example of earthly and heavenly saints, address the reason for this exhortation and the inspiration of the saints - the call to holiness. As instructed in the scriptures "Be holy, for I am holy." (Lev 11:44, 1 Pet 1:16). This call to be holy as God is holy, is to be lived in our own way. This call, though universal to all of God's faithful people, is lived and expressed to each in their own way by the Lord.

We can easily brush this off as being for the 'professional Catholics', those who are bishops, priests, deacons, religious men and women; or even those with theology or philosophy degrees and qualifications. Pope Francis encourages us to avoid this writing: 'We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves' (GEE 14). He examines how we can answer our call regardless of what our vocation is or what work of life

we are from. This response to the call of holiness in our lives is the fruit that is born by the grace of our baptism. We have been given the Holy Spirit so that we may have the power to respond, not by our own strength, but his. In our next session we will explore further the balance between not despairing at our weakness or depending on our own goodness and strength. Here the Pope stresses our need for the Church. We do not have to go seeking a hidden knowledge or road map to success, the Church in her communities, sacraments, holy place etc. provide us what need for our journey.

The call that is given to us is to be transformed in the little moments as well as the big. Paragraph 16 explores the small challenges that you can face in a day and how these can be transformed to gifts that help us grow in holiness. Large challenges too can be great reflection points to examine our life and how/where we are allowing grace to shape.

The next section is almost an echo of the first two as the Pope reminds us that our path on earth is a mission in Christ to others, as the saints are to us. Each saint and each of us are a mission planted and empowered by the Father for a specific moment in time and a certain aspect of the Gospel. To be fully able to be Jesus to others we need to be transformed, living our charity to the full, listening to God in prayer, and recognising the signs he gives us. Pope Francis begs us to allow ourselves to be transformed and to be open to renewal in the Holy Spirit.

How do we allow ourselves to be transformed and renewed? Pope Francis calls this activity that sanctifies. It begins with looking out of ourselves not into ourselves; seeing how we may best commit ourselves to the building of the kingdom. He stresses though, that anything that is done out of pride, anxiety or the need to impress will never lead to holiness. In these cases, we do not build God's kingdom but our own. We therefore need to make the room in the midst of our work and responsibilities for stillness, for it is stillness where we most clearly hear the Word of God.

All this talk of transformation, renewal and mission in Christ can seem to be an attack on our personhood, a rejection of not just selfish desire but who we are. Do I really want to change who I am? Will I not become less of me and be a mindless Jesus clone. On the contrary, holiness is us being fully ourselves, we will be faithful to our deepest self. Fully human and fully alive, free from every enslavement from sin.

The last paragraph of this chapter articulates well the Pope's aim of the call to holiness, so is presented below in its entirety:

'Do not be afraid to set your sights higher, to allow yourself to be loved and liberated by God. Do not be afraid to let yourself be guided by the Holy Spirit.

Holiness does not make you less human, since it is an encounter between your weakness and the power of God's grace. For in the words of León Bloy, when all is said and done, "the only great tragedy in life, is not to become a saint".' (GEE 34)

Group discussion questions

Do not feel you have to use all of the questions at all.

- What is your reaction to the reflection?
- Who is your patron/favourite saint? How has their example encouraged your own faith?
- What are the challenges for us to answer our call to holiness?
- How can we seek to be transformed in Christ and renewed by the Holy Spirit?
- Where do you feel you can contribute to the building of God's kingdom?
- What do you think is meant by holiness? Holiness being an encounter with our weakness and the power of God's grace.

RECONCILIATION SERVICES

Two reconciliation services have been prepared for use in Lent, reflecting on discipleship. The first is based on the moments of the Passion that are found in the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary and the second, the beatitudes. The first is a very interactive service with important roles of a leader(s) and some readers, to guide the congregation through it. This can be found in **Appendix 1**. The second is a simple service with a penitential act, one reading, examination of conscience and blessing. This is aimed to be more reflective and it can be found in **Appendix 2**.

The aim of these services would be that a few priests gather together but it is possible to run them with just one or two priests.

PRAYER LIFE OF A DISCIPLE

Presented here are some suggestions how to develop our daily prayer life during Lent. Before every major point in Jesus life, he prayed. Discipleship is a time of allowing Christ to transform us into his image and likeness. This cannot be done unless we spend time with him in prayer. Below are some things to help us do this.

Daily Prayer Routine

Reproduced in **Appendix 3** is a daily prayer routine that was included in the Advent Encounter pack which parishioners could commit themselves to during Lent.

The Examen Prayer

The Examen Prayer is a wonderful way for us to examine our day, how we have responded to Our Lord's call of discipleship and how we can respond better the next day. A special adapted version for Lent can be viewed here:

<https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/from-ashes-to-glory>

A simplified version can be found in **Appendix 4** which can be learnt off by heart and practised daily.

Stations of the Cross – Reflections on Discipleship

The traditional Lenten practice of the Stations of the Cross is usually celebrated on the Fridays or Sundays of Lent. A version of the Stations of the Cross with reflections on discipleship have been produced for this document (**Appendix 5**). You may wish to use them in your parish/chaplaincy. It is important to encourage people to make the effort to come to the Stations, as it is a time when we accompany Jesus, as only a few disciples did, in his darkest yet wonderfully glorious journey to the cross.

DISCIPLESHIP AND LENT

The spiritual aspect of Lent that is most famous is of course fasting, though it is not the only spiritual discipline. The other two are prayer and almsgiving. We have dealt with prayer in the previous section so here we will concentrate on fasting and almsgiving.

Fasting

One way of describing fasting is spiritual training. It should be a reordering of our lives and loves rather than an opportunity to diet. Consider how we can use fasting to grow as disciples. What is it that we need to remove from our lives so that we can work on being better disciples, letting God in more? Fasting is a wonderful Christian discipline. Prayer without fasting is like boxing with one hand behind your back; though fasting without prayer is dieting! Fasting in Lent is more than giving up chocolate. Here are some fasting ideas that are intended to help us to grow as disciples and to get closer to Jesus.

Time

- Time wasting – how much time in our days is wasted doing nothing of any importance? Why not use some of your spare time to help others, to pray, or to read the bible?
- Alone time – it is important to have time to ourselves. Some people need alone for their wellbeing; however it can be tempting to over indulge in this. In Lent use some of this time to be with your family, to visit friends who are lonely, fellow parishioners, the sick or housebound, or to volunteer.
- Social media – how much time do you spend on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or Youtube compared to the amount of time you spend with God?
- Snooze button – a huge challenge! But to get out of bed at the first alarm and in the time gained, you offer your prayer to God.

Possessions

- Toys – some old toys can sit in boxes in the loft, in the garage or under the bed and are not used for years. However there will be countless children who would love to receive them.
- Clothes – as with toys, there are many items of clothing that either don't fit or we simply don't wear! Donate these to charity shops or clothes banks so that other people can get some use out of them
- Money – we give money so that it doesn't become our master! How can we give our money regularly in Lent to make a difference to our brothers and sisters in need?

Food

- Eat simply – simple and basic meals are more than some people can dream of so let's take the time this Lent to live in solidarity with those less well off and eat simpler meals. The meals can be a reminder to pray for those without.
- Foodbanks – why not keep buying some of the food that you are planning to give up for Lent but to give it to foodbanks instead? Often treats that we take for granted are never donated to foodbanks.
- Just water – why not fast from drinks other than water? 844 million people and 34% of schools in the world do not have clean water (statistics from WaterAid). By focussing on drinking water, every sip can be a moment to pray for those in need and to donate towards charities such as WaterAid.

Almsgiving

Like fasting, almsgiving is another important Lenten practice as it encourages us to open our hearts, to detach ourselves from love of money and that our wealth is not just for ourselves. It is often said that the currency of our modern society is in fact time and not money. This Lent can be an opportunity to see how our usual practise to reflect on what can I fast from and what can I promise to do/give to grow in my discipleship of Jesus. A few of the fasting ideas above do cross into the almsgiving practice too!

Each of us can ask:

- Considering my relationship with God, what in my life pulls me further away from being a true disciple of Christ?
- Considering my relationship with others, how can I use Lent as an opportunity to relieve the pain and suffering of those around me?

We are used to following an Advent calendar but why not follow one in Lent too? Mission Together, the children's branch of Missio which is the Church's charity for overseas mission, have produced a Lenten calendar full of great ideas how children can live out being a disciple this Lent. Please share the link with the families in your parish. <https://missiontogether.org.uk/lent/>

Rediscover Jesus by Matthew Kelly

Rediscover Jesus is a book that contains a 40-day programme to help us grow as disciples of Christ. There is a chapter for each day which contains a reflection on a point of discipleship, a short challenge to take into the day, a verse from the bible to consider, a question to reflect on in the day and a short prayer focused on these points. The ISBN of the paperback is 978-1-942611-20-2, audiobook is 978-1-942611-38-7, and ebook is 978-1-942611-39-4.

BAPTISMAL PROMISES REFLECTION

Lent leads up to this moment, and it is proposed by many Church historians that the keeping of Lenten fast and penance was in unison with the catechumenate preparing for Baptism. Baptism and Easter are intrinsically linked. Lent leads to baptism, to the dying and rising with Christ and the renewal of baptismal promises is our opportunity to reaffirm our choice and commitment as a disciple of Jesus. Yet how often in Lent do we take time to prepare for the renewal of our baptismal promises? Presented here are some reflections on the baptismal promises that we renew at the Easter vigil. This could be given out on Palm Sunday or at any point in Lent. You may wish to put these in the bulletin in sections throughout Lent to reflect upon. You may wish to produce your own reflections but some are given here.

1. Do you renounce Satan, and all his works and all his empty promises?

The first step in being a disciple is to turn away from sin as Jesus says; no one can serve two masters. It can be easy in our materialistic world to forget that Satan does exist and his aim is to draw us away from Jesus. Satan is also very sly and little by little he plants his doubts and distractions into our hearts. Now is a good time to take notice of these, renounce them and turn back to Jesus. Everything that draws us away from God does so because it promises us more happiness than God. It promises an easier and sometimes 'fair' way. These promises are empty, they are lies, they will never lead to our happiness only to sadness, dissatisfaction and emptiness. Consider what do I seek my happiness in? Is this bearing fruit of love, peace and joy in my life?

2. Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

God is our merciful and loving Father, he is the source of all goodness and joy. His power is beyond our imagination and yet he does not lord it over us, he does not force us to worship him. He blesses us with so many graces and gifts every single day. It can be easy for us to focus on our own achievements and fail to give thanks to God. How often do you thank God for the small things as well as the big? Do you thank him for his love? For creation? Do you trust God as your loving Father? Do you believe he wants the best for you? Do you give him time in prayer? God the Father is not an angry lightning bolt throwing deity, sat on a cloud judging the world below with disdain. He is an intimate, caring and patient Father. What aspects of fatherhood do you associate with God? Sadly, our society does not have as many great examples of fathers as it did in the past. Does your relationship with your father become a lens in which you view God the Father? What type of father do you need God to be for you?

3. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

We are told from a young age that Jesus died to take away the sins of the world. Do we consider that he came to die for each of us? That he died for you, personally, not just part of the collective of all humanity. He was thinking of you on Good Friday, he wanted to bring you freedom and healing. This is true, Jesus thought of each of us individually as he hung on that cross. He felt the weight of our sin and the pain of those who sin against us. His coming to earth is a historical fact. The Gospel of Luke places it in an exact point of history, he wasn't just an ordinary historical man. He was born of a virgin, God was (and is) his father. Jesus is God, the same God that created the heavens and the earth. The fullness and majesty of God was present in the man, Jesus. He was born like us and like us he experienced: childhood, being a teenager, learning a craft, rejection, loss, temptation, anger, fear, love, being misunderstood, loneliness. He lived a full human life and died a full human death. This is who we are asked to believe in, not a God as a mythical or distant being, but a God who lived in a certain place on this earth, at a certain time in history for a certain reason. That reason for you to know him, to love and be loved by him. A God who has defeated death. We can delay death with medicine and technological advance but we can't overpower it. He defeated it. The life he offers cannot be ended. He is in heaven, he lives. The man Jesus is not consigned to history to be forgotten. He reigns for eternity and wants us to be with him. This is who you are asked to believe in.

4. Do you 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?

The Holy Spirit is almost the forgotten person of the Trinity. We are dualists who believe in the Father and the Son alone; the Holy Spirit is an equal and distinct person. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that the Church works in the world, their unity as seen in this baptismal promise. It is also by the Holy Spirit that the saints were able to be true disciples of Christ. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that our sins are forgiven through the Sacraments. It is by the Holy Spirit that Jesus was raised from the dead and we will be raised too. It is through the Holy Spirit that we will enjoy life everlasting, unity, freedom, life, these are wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that it is better for us that he ascended so that we can receive the Holy Spirit. In our Baptism the Holy Spirit came into our lives; in Confirmation we were sealed with the Holy Spirit to go out and do Jesus' work. The Church is the bride of Christ, he makes her holy by the gift of himself. Often people see the human side of the Church only, what a travesty! Often people see it as an institutional organisation. Do they see that we are the Church? That we are Christ's presence to heal and free a broken world. How do you engage with the life of

the Church? For one hour on Sunday? How do you benefit from being part of a parish? How does your parish benefit from having you as part of it? Each and everyone of us is called to be an active member of the Church, to give and receive. To joyfully grow with our brothers and sisters in Christ, they are part of the communion of saints, how do we celebrate this? The Church is never static, it is also not dying but we are called to help the Church to grow. If we really believe in the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting what can we do to share this gift with those in need? Pope Francis called the Church a field hospital, a place in the world for all people to find the healing they need in life. Those who are most injured or broken are those in most need of the Church. How can we reach them?

APPENDIX 1 – SORROWFUL MYSTERIES RECONCILIATION SERVICE

Opening Hymn

Priest: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Response: Amen

Priest: The Lord be with you

Response: And with your Spirit

Introduction

Leader: Today the readings and reflections of our reconciliation service are taken from the sorrowful mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available throughout our service. If you are not a Catholic you are welcome to come forward to speak to a priest and receive a blessing. Do not worry if it has been a while since your last confession, the priest will guide you through what you need to say and do.

Collect

Priest: Let us pray,
Heavenly Father, as we gather together to remember and relive the story of how Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, gave His life to free us from our sins, may we hear anew His great love for us and that through His sharing in our humanity, we can now share in His divinity. We ask this through Jesus Christ Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit one God for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Leader: The Priest(s) will now go to their places ready to share with us the forgiveness and healing that Jesus is wanting us to receive. Feel free to go to Confession at any point from now. There will be reflections readings while you wait.

First Sorrowful Mystery: The Agony in the Garden

Reading

Leader: In our first mystery we hear the story of Jesus praying on Maundy Thursday night. Jesus had a choice to make; he could very easily have run away from the suffering he was going to go through, but instead he stayed. He stayed because he knew that it would save us and that this was the plan God had for Him. He placed us at the front of his mind, and during this time and beyond, we should do the same.

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to St Mark (Mk 14:32-42)

‘They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I pray.’ He took with him Peter and James and John and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, ‘I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.’ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, ‘Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.’

He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, ‘Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. He came a third time and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.’

The Gospel of the Lord

Response: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Leader: It can be hard not to be struck by Jesus’ loneliness here, his friends won’t stay awake to pray with him and then Judas hands him over to be killed. Who do you most identify with in this reading? Jesus? Peter, James and John? Or even Judas?

Leader: Temptation is an opportunity to show our love for God, to resist the call to ignore or betray God’s love for us. Jesus knows the pain and suffering ahead of him. The physical agony of the cross though, pales in comparison to knowing it is those he loves who are doing this to him, who hate him so much. Or the feeling of separation and pain that he will feel when he takes upon him all our sins.

Leader: Consider again this Gospel story. Who do you relate most to? Where do you need most the healing touch of Jesus, who bore it all, so you do not have to.

You might feel it is appropriate to give out copies of this reading for the congregation to read again and reflect upon.

Time of Silence, Music or Hymns (or all three)

Prayer

Reader: We respond to the prayers with the response: **Jesus I know you are with me.**
Loving Father, help all those who are struggling and are lonely in life. Help them to be understood and accepted for who they truly are. Jesus, we need You.

All: Jesus, I know You are with me

Reader: Suffering Jesus, You know what it is like to feel left out, unwanted, rejected and not needed. Free us from this whenever we feel alone, by letting us know you are near. Jesus, we need You.

All: Jesus, I know You are with me

Second Sorrowful Mystery: The Scourging at the Pillar

Reading

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to St John (Jn 18:38-40)
Pilate went out to the Jews again and told them, 'I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' They shouted in reply, 'Not this man, but Barabbas!' Now Barabbas was a bandit. Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.

Leader: Our second reflection point comes when Jesus is arrested. He is tied to a post and beaten mercilessly by the soldiers. He had done nothing wrong, he did not deserve this, he was completely innocent but is treated like a murderer or the worst of criminals. He could have gotten angry and taken revenge at any point, but he doesn't, he chooses to share with the suffering who are picked on for no reason.

Reader: What we learn from this reading is that Jesus has every right to be angry and violent, but he isn't. He even secures the freedom of Barabbas; how can we try to be like Jesus?

Leader: Our reflection in response to this reading is to consider how we have treated others, an examination of conscience.

Reader: Have I spread lies or gossiped about someone else to hurt them or to make myself seem better?

Pause

Have I wished bad on others? Hoping they will get hurt or be unhappy?

Pause

Have I taken joy out of other people's fear and sadness?

Pause

Have I said hurtful and nasty things to others, either in person, behind their back or through other forms of communication?

Pause

Have I physically hit, attacked, hurt or assaulted anyone?

Pause

Have I failed to help someone in need, or encouraged the harm of others?

Pause

Have I held on to grudges and refused to forgive others?

Pause

Have I caused harm to myself, not accepted forgiveness, or refused to see what is good about me?

Pause

Have I reduced others to a mere object by viewing or treating them with lust, engaging with pornography or committing adultery?

Pause

Have I failed to show God the love he deserves by missing Sunday Mass, not praying, blaspheming, or placing my trust in the material world or the occult?

Time of silence, music and hymns.

Prayer

Reader: The response to the prayers is; **Lord, I am sorry.**

Jesus went through all this to free us from our sins, everything bad we have done. He does not want us to remain in guilt and shame he wants us to be free. He wants you to be free. If you have remembered any sin from these questions we seek God's forgiveness. For what we have done we pray;

All: Lord I am sorry

Reader: We pray for ourselves. May we be enlightened by Jesus' example of forgiveness and compassion in our own lives so that we can begin to live out and share the forgiveness we receive from the Lord. For the times when we have not done this we pray;

All: Lord I am sorry

Long Pause

Third Sorrowful Mystery: The Crowning with Thorns

Reading

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to St Matthew (Mt 27:27-31)
Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Leader: Our third moment follows on from the scourging at the pillar. The reading tells us of how Jesus was mocked and cruelly beaten. They twisted thorns into a crown and pushed it into his head to make fun of him being a king. Our faith confesses that our God knows what it is like to be made fun of, mocked, hated and ridiculed for who he is, to receive the most awful human behaviour so we would know He lived as we lived in the joys and the deepest of sorrows

Reflection

Reader: For this reflection we will consider how Jesus was mocked and made fun of. Collected here are some of the worst things that have been said to teenagers by other teenagers. How many of these words have resonated in your ears or come out of your mouth?

After each word pause for at least a second or two, it should not just be reeled off! It may be appropriate to play underneath some slow reflective music.

Reader:	Gloomy	Thick
	Ignorant	Mental
	A Failure	Evil
	Selfish	Untalented
	Pig	Dumb
	Liar	Hypocrite
	Thoughtless	Stupid
	Idiot	Depressing
	Dirty	Loser
	Annoying	Cow
	Nasty	Rubbish
	Unloveable	A waste of space
	Horrible	

Long Pause

Leader: Each time we are called one of these words, or use one of these words to others, it is another thorn in Jesus' crown. These thorns hurt Him more than the the spikes that pierced his flesh. He feels our pain, he weeps with us and he wants us to know that it's not true.

Short Pause

Reader: Just as Jesus should have been given a crown of gold but was given a crown of thorns, we are called names or have horrible things said about us that aren't true, Jesus wants you to know that you are:

These should be read as the previous list

Good	Inspirational
Loving	Kind
Caring	Great
Amazing	Handsome
Beautiful	Brave
Strong	Funny
Friendly	The Best
Selfless	Talented
Creative	Awesome
Worthwhile	Wanted
Needed	Important
Treasured	Chosen
Gifted	

But above all...**loved**. Jesus wore a crown of thorns so that you can wear a crown of glory. Never doubt that and never rob someone else of their crown.

Prayer

Reader: The responses to the prayers are: **Let me see them, as You see them Lord** or **Let me see myself, as You see me Lord**.

We pray for those who are mocked for their religion just as Jesus was.

We pray that with your strength they will continue to devote their lives.

Let me see them, as You see them Lord;

All: Let me see them, as You see them Lord

Reader: We pray for ourselves when we start to believe the horrible things people say to us. In these times help us to know we are not alone, that they are lies and that we are loved by you. Let me see myself, as You see me Lord;

All: Let me see myself, as You see me Lord.

Fourth Sorrowful Mystery: Jesus carries the cross

For this section the people will be encouraged to consider what struggles they may be carrying and wish to hand over to Jesus. There are a number of ways this can be done, two are suggested here. Before the service begins each person is given a bead or small stone to hold; or they are given a small piece of paper and a pen/pencil.

Reading

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to St John. (Jn 19:14-17)
Pilate said to the Jews, 'Here is your King!' They cried out, 'Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but Caesar.' Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

Leader: In our fourth mystery, Jesus is given the cross to carry. Imagine the weight of it on his already beaten and bleeding body. We hear that Jesus responds by embracing the cross. Carrying the cross is a great struggle for him. He has almost no energy to go on, but he does. We have different struggles: in school, in work, at home, with friends, with how we view ourselves or how others view us. Jesus embraces the cross because this struggle is a symbol of all our struggles, he does not want us to walk alone.

Reflection Option 1

Reader: You were given a bead/stone before the start of our service. We want you to now hold this between your finger and thumb, tight in your hand. What are you struggling with at the moment? What is causing you stress? What is upsetting you or making you feel discomfort? What is upsetting you or making you feel you are not good enough? In a moment of silence, think of your struggles and imagine squeezing them into this bead.

Silence, music or hymns

Reflection Option 2

Reader: You were given a piece of paper before the start of our service. We want you to now write on it all of your troubles. What are you struggling with at the moment? What is causing you stress? What is upsetting you or making you feel discomfort? What is upsetting you or making you feel you are not good enough? In a moment of silence, think of your struggles and write them on here, lay them on the cross.

Silence, music or hymns

Prayer

Reader: The response to the prayers is; **Walk with me Jesus.**
We pray for those who are less fortunate, who cannot cope with their struggles in life. Help them to find a new lease of life by the power of your love. Along my path of life;

All: Walk with me Jesus.

Reader: We pray for ourselves, for the struggles that we are facing or going to face. We pray especially for those in our community who are struggling to carry their own personal crosses at this time. Along my path of life;

All: Walk with me Jesus.

Reflection or Homily

At this point a priest or deacon could give a homily or a lay person could give their testimony of how they have found peace and healing through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Fifth Sorrowful Mystery: The Crucifixion

Reading

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to St Matthew (Mt 27:45-50)
From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.' Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.

Reader: Our fifth and final mystery tells us that Jesus' death was for the greater good of humanity and no matter what others thought or believed of him, he still continued on his journey to the cross so that we could be saved from all our sins. Whenever we are going through tough times, God can and will change this for us. At any point Jesus could have got off the cross, but he didn't, he chose to suffer it all for us, so that we do not have to suffer alone.

Leader: You are invited to come up to the sanctuary when you are ready, to place your *bead/stone/piece of paper* representing all of your struggles at the foot of the altar. The altar in every Church symbolises Christ, his sacrifice that gives us freedom and redemption. Placing your *stone/bead/piece of paper* at the foot of the altar is a sign that we are handing over and uniting our struggles with Jesus sacrifice and allowing him to take these from us.

Sustained period of silence, music or hymns.

Once people have had a good opportunity to lay their struggles at the altar, continue with the prayers below, ensure each person has a copy of the prayer. This could be done at the start of the service or given to them after they have placed their struggles at the altar.

Reader: If Jesus' story had ended at Good Friday, it would not been known as Good Friday. Maybe His story would never be known at all. But it doesn't end here. St Matthew's Gospel tells us that on the Sunday morning some women went to the tomb. Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.' Jesus defeats death, something us humans cannot do and gives us new life, eternal life. He can take away everything that we want him to in the same way.

Leader: As we finish our journey with Jesus from Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday, we pray together our prayer of thanksgiving.

This prayer should be made available to the congregation before the start of the service.

**All: Jesus my saviour, You have felt what it is like to be lonely, mocked, beaten, despised and rejected.
You chose to go through with this so that I would never feel alone. Help me to know that You love me and encourage me to accept Your love.
In moments of despair give me strength to hope and trust in You; that You will see me through this time and once again fill me with joy. Today you have given me a new start by taking away all of my sins and struggles, may I seek to become more like You in everything I say and do.
Amen.**

Concluding Prayer & Final Blessing

Priest: Let us pray,
Lord Jesus, as we have recalled today, Your saving action on Calvary where You took upon yourself all the brokenness of humanity and it died with You and reconciled us to the Father's heart, give us the hope of the Resurrection and knowledge that we can do all things through You. We ask this through You who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

All: Amen

Priest: May almighty God bless you through these most sacred days and by His love defend you from every temptation to sin.

All: Amen

Priest: And may He, who restores you to eternal life in the Resurrection of His Divine Son, give to you the prize of immortality.

All: Amen

Priest: And may all you who walk with the Lord in His suffering, rejoice with Him in His victory over sin and death.

All: Amen

Priest: And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All: Amen

Priest: Go announce the Gospel by your lives.

All: Thanks be to God.

Final Hymn

APPENDIX 2 – RECONCILIATION SERVICE – THE BEATITUDES

Opening Hymn

Priest: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Response: Amen

Priest: The Lord be with you

Response: And with your Spirit

Priest: Brothers and sisters, as we gather together to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation let us recall the great love and mercy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

Priest: Lord Jesus, you came to reconcile us to one another and to the Father.
Lord have mercy

Response: Lord have mercy

Priest: Lord Jesus, you heal the wounds of sin and division. Christ have mercy

Response: Christ have mercy

Priest: Lord Jesus you intercede for us to the Father. Lord have mercy.

Response: Lord have mercy

Priest: Let us pray,
Almighty and merciful God, you sent your Son amongst us for the forgiveness of sins. He lived a fully human life in every way but sin. Send your Holy Spirit upon us today to make known to us the times and ways we have failed to live as a true disciple of Christ. We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit one God for ever and ever.

Response: Amen

The priest(s) go to where they will hear confession. These places are highlighted to the people and if a deacon is present he reads the Gospel, if not it is read by a reader without 'the Lord be with you' greeting, beginning at a reading from...

Deacon: The Lord be with you

Response: And with your spirit

Deacon: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (Mt 5:1-23)

Response: Glory to you O Lord

Deacon: Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:

Blessed are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage. Blessed those who mourn: they shall be comforted. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them. Blessed are the pure in heart they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people abuse you on my account. Rejoice and be glad for your reward will be great in heaven. This is how they persecuted the prophets before you.

The Gospel of the Lord

Response: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Examination of Conscience

Reader: The beatitudes are the blueprint of being a disciple of Jesus. Our examination of conscience aims to highlight where we have failed to live out our call of being a disciple to the fullest.

Pause

Blessed are the poor in spirit - a disciple who is poor in spirit places the love of God and God's calling for them as the most important part of their life.

- Have I failed to trust in God and tried to achieve things on my own merits?
- Have I prayed daily and read the scriptures?
- Have I purposefully missed Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation?
- Have I trusted in horoscopes, tarot cards, fortune telling or the occult?
- Have I used the Lord's name in vain or not shown proper reverence to sacred things?
- Have I caused others to doubt their faith?
- If I have children have I lived out my duty to encourage and educate them in the faith?
- Have I placed anything ahead of God in my life?

Pause

Blessed are the gentle - a disciple is called to place themselves as the least and raise others up.

- Have I allowed pride to grow and presented myself as more important than others?
- Have I begrudged any blessings that others have received?

- Have I shown true interest to those who have sought my advice?
- Have I been patient and considerate to others?
- Have I celebrated the achievements of others or belittled them?
- Have I told lies or exaggerated situations to feed my ego?

Pause

Blessed are those who mourn - Jesus mourned not only for those who he loved but for those who were lost to sin. As a disciple we are called to reach the lost, the lonely and the least.

- Have I remembered to pray for the dead and the souls in purgatory?
- Have I completed the penance from my last confession?
- Am I truly contrite for my sins?
- Am I moved by the tragedy and suffering in the world or remain passive?
- Have I prayed for those who are in need of my prayers?
- Have I shared my faith with others?

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right- Jesus called his disciples the light of the world and the salt of the earth. As disciples we are called to help build the kingdom on earth.

- Have I stolen or not returned anything I have borrowed?
- Have I justly treated others as I would like to be treated?
- Have I supported the work of charities?
- Have I been generous with my time and money?
- Have I worked for a more just world?
- Have I responded when someone has needed my help?
- Have I treated people unjustly because of their race, culture, ability, sex or age?
- Have I given witness to the love of God by how I have treated others by my words or actions?

Time of silence, reflection, music or hymns.

Blessed are the merciful - mercy is the balm of Christianity and central to the nature of our God and the identity of being a disciple.

- Have I shown honour, love and care to my parents?
- Have I taken care of my children?
- Have I sought forgiveness for my sins against others?
- Have I forgiven those who have wronged me or harboured resentment?
- Have I shown love and devotion to my spouse and prayed for them daily?
- Have I been mindful of the needs of others?

Blessed are the pure in heart - the heart of God is pure from any selfishness or desire to use others for His own gain. The call to holiness of a disciple is to allow their heart to be transformed the same.

- Have I desired the life of others, feeling they do not deserve it or failed to show gratitude for the many gifts God has given me?
- Have I covertly the relationship of someone else's spouse, caused friction or undermined the marriage of another?
- Have I showed my spouse the respect and honour they deserve as a Child of God or have I taken them for granted or abused them?
- Have I indulged in lustful fantasies, desires or thoughts?
- Have I engaged with pornographic images or material?
- Have I performed lustful acts on my own or with another?
- Have I acted in an unchaste way, not appropriate for my material state?
- Have I committed adultery?

Blessed are the peacemakers - Jesus is the Prince of Peace and his gift to his disciples is a peace no one else can give. It is our duty as disciples to share this in the world.

- Have I spread lies or gossip about others, even if I thought it was true?
- Have I caused division amongst others or disagreements to escalate?
- Have I prayed for peace in the world and an end to conflict?
- Have I hurt anyone either physically or emotionally?
- Have I stood by while others have been abused or mistreated?

Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of right - on the night before his passion Our Lord told his disciples that they too will be hated and rejected. As his disciples today, we should not be surprised by the same treatment

- Have I failed to defend my faith or joined in with others who deride the Christ and his Church?
- Have I been more worried about people's opinion of me or standing by the truth?
- Have I worked honestly and fairly, not mistreating others, being lazy or taken things I shouldn't have from work?
- Have I approached my studies with love and enthusiasm or have wasted the opportunities that have been given to me?
- Have I followed the crowd or given into peer pressure rather than standing by what I believe to be true?
- Have I gone out of my way to do right and help others, especially those who are rejected by society?

Time of silence, music, and/or hymns

Closing Prayer

Priest: Merciful Saviour,
Today you have renewed us and washed us clean in your precious blood through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You have restored to us our dignity as your disciples and children of the Father. Renew us also, in your Holy Spirit, that we may resist temptation and better serve you and your people every day. We ask this through You who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

Response: Amen

Solemn Blessing

Deacon: Bow down for the blessing

Priest: May almighty God bless you through these most sacred days and by His love defend you from every temptation to sin.

All: Amen

Priest: And may He, who restores you to eternal life in the Resurrection of His Divine Son, give to you the prize of immortality.

All: Amen

Priest: And may all you who walk with the Lord in His suffering, rejoice with Him in His victory over sin and death.

All: Amen

Priest: And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All: Amen

Deacon: Go announce the Gospel by your lives.

All: Thanks be to God.

APPENDIX 3 - DAILY PRAYER ROUTINE

A MORNING PRAYER ROUTINE

THANK YOU

Begin by thanking God in a personal way for whatever you are most grateful for today.

I OFFER

Make a personal 'offering' of the events of the coming day to the Lord. Think of situations/meetings when you want the Lord to guide you in your decisions or to help you in some particular way (eg. with patience, sensitivity, thoughtfulness towards others, etc.)

HELP ME

Ask for the Lord's help that you may walk closely with him in thought, word, and deed throughout the day.

FINAL PRAYER

Prayer of St. Richard of Chichester

Thanks be to you, my Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.

O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

SUGGESTION

To begin with, just spend 1 minute on each aspect of prayer, and then expand each as they begin to feel more comfortable and as your time of prayer allows.

A NIGHT PRAYER ROUTINE

THANK YOU

Begin by thanking God in a personal way for any times in the day when you have 'sensed' the help/guidance of God's Holy Spirit (eg. with patience, sensitivity, thoughtfulness towards others, etc.)

I'M SORRY

Think over the events of the day and ask God to forgive you for any wrongs you committed in thought, word, deed or omission.

Then make a simple act of contrition:

I love you, Jesus, my love above all things. I repent with my whole heart of having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love you always, and then do with me what you will.

INTERCESSION

Bring before God anyone you wish to pray for (family, friends, parishioners, colleagues, neighbours), asking God to bless and help them.

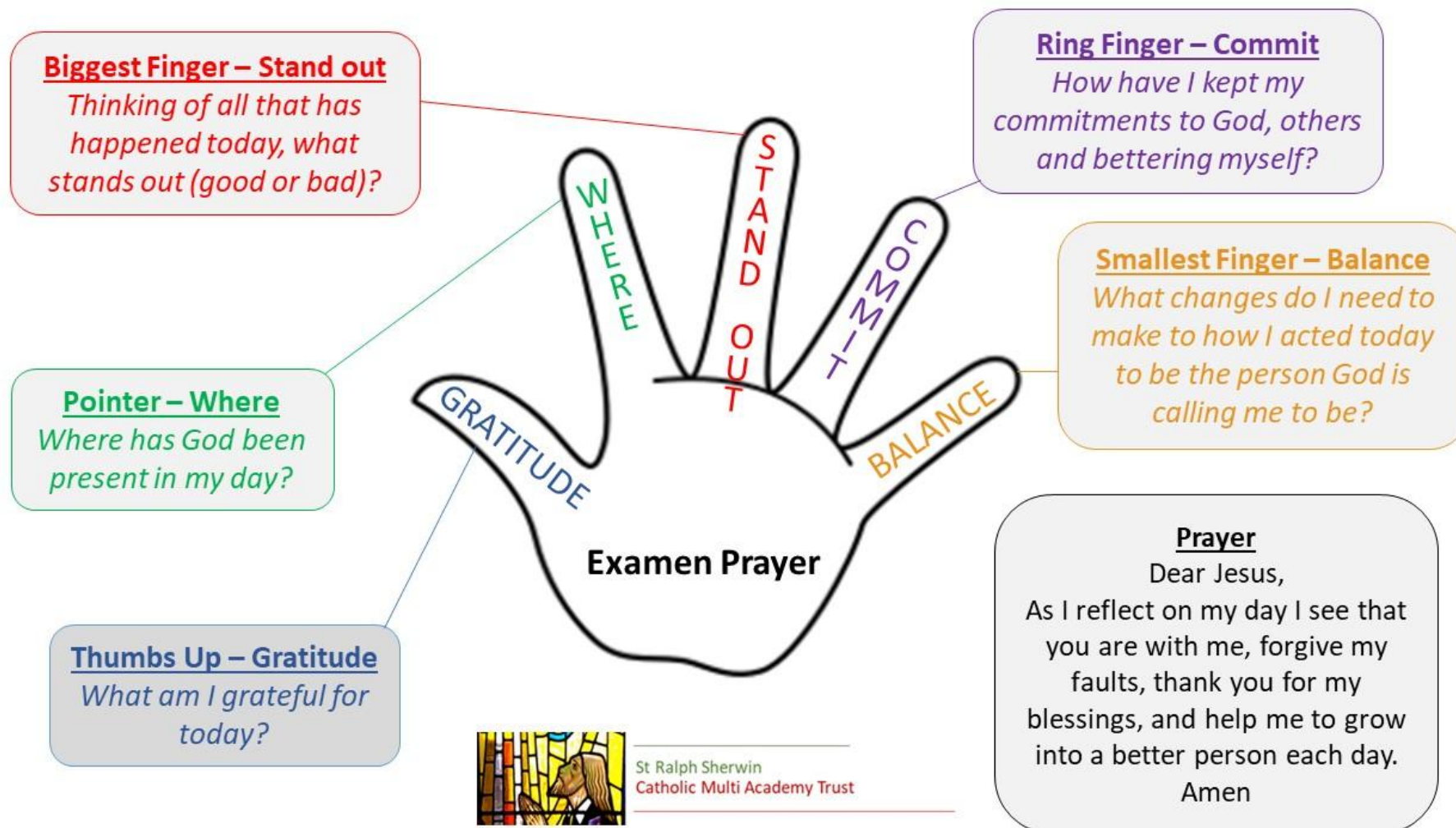
FINAL PRAYER

Pray the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be, and then ask God to grant you restful sleep.

SUGGESTION

To begin with, just spend 1 minute on each aspect of prayer, and then expand each as they begin to feel more comfortable and as your time of prayer allows.

APPENDIX 4 – EXAMEN PRAYER SIMPLIFIED



Appendix 5 – Stations of the Cross – Reflections on Discipleship

This Stations of the Cross service provides a bible reading, reflection, prayer for each station. You may wish to sing the Stabat Mater between each station, the Taizé chant; Jesus Remember Me or another suitable hymn. After each station you may also add an Our Father, Hail Mary and/or Glory Be. This could be celebrated in the homes of the housebound too. It may be appropriate to get children from the children's liturgy group to create pictures for each station.

Opening Hymn

Leader: We begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Response: Amen

Leader: Let us pray,
Lord Jesus, our Saviour and our God, as we retrace your steps to Calvary and placement in the tomb, may we be strengthened to pick up our own crosses each day and follow you as dedicated and joyful disciples. We ask this in your holy and powerful name.

Response: Amen

First Station - Jesus is condemned to death

Leader: The first station, Jesus is condemned to death.
We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

Response: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: Pilate asked the crowd 'Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' For he realised that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, 'Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?' They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!' So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Pause

Reflection: Jesus is stood before his people, beaten, mocked and broken. The crowd calls for his execution. He looks on them with no less love than when he preached and healed. No thought of hate or anger comes to mind, only the agony of rejected love. The call to discipleship is not an easy call to answer, it demands of us love beyond our human ability. We need Christ to dwell in us, for when we are faced with the challenge of rejection or condemnation, he will strengthen us to continue to look out with love and joy at the road of discipleship ahead.

Pause

Reader: Loving Jesus, fill us with your love and strength to choose to walk the road of discipleship without fear or anxiety.

Pause

All: I love you Jesus my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you, never permit me to separate myself from you again, grant that I may love you always and do with me what you will.

Second Station: Jesus takes up his cross

Leader: The second station, Jesus takes up his cross.
We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

Response: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: So the soldiers took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

Reflection: When the people saw him take up his cross did they remember his words, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.' At the time of Jesus, the cross was seen as a sign of defeat, shame and loss. For us today the cross is a sign of hope, victory, and redemption. Just as Christ transformed his cross from condemnation to salvation, he can turn our crosses into means of our own salvation. The road of discipleship will not be easy but Jesus will never let us carry more than we can bear. Our daily struggles will lead to the joy of being his disciples.

Pause

All: I love you Jesus my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you, never permit me to separate myself from you again, grant that I may love you always and do with me what you will.

Third Station: Jesus falls the first time

Leader: The third station, Jesus falls for the first time.
We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

Response: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: The next day John the Baptist saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'

Reflection: The Lamb of God was the Passover lamb, sacrificed to spare the lives of the Israelites. Spotless, humble and gentle - what a great image for our saviour Jesus. As he stumbles under the weight of his calling, he is not downhearted. His strength is not being fall-proof but in getting up again. When we fall on our journey of discipleship, it can feel that we have no way of carrying on. Christ was stronger than the weight of the cross, through his grace we are stronger than the weight of our sin and failing. The sign of a disciple is not one who never falls but one who chooses to get up again and continue to walk the way of life.

Pause

All: I love you Jesus my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you, never permit me to separate myself from you again, grant that I may love you always and do with me what you will.

Fourth Station: Jesus meets his mother

Leader: The fourth station, Jesus meets his mother.
We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

Response: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: 'Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

Reflection: Mary was the first to welcome Jesus, the first to answer the call to discipleship and one of the very few who does not abandon him now. The sight of her must fill our Lord with such love and hope, her prayers sustain him along his way. Gaze upon Mary, the perfect disciple, and know that she gazes upon you, her love and prayers will sustain you on your way.

Pause

All: I love you Jesus my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you, never permit me to separate myself from you again, grant that I may love you always and do with me what you will.

Fifth Station: Simon carries the Cross

Leader: The fifth station, Simon carries Jesus' cross.
We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

Response: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: The soldiers compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.

Reflection: Simon of Cyrene is one of the most intriguing people in the Gospels. He appears very briefly in the scriptures but plays such an important role and is known throughout the centuries. It is not known if he was a disciple of Jesus before, but we can assume he was after, as his sons are known to the Christian audience who St Mark wrote his gospel for. The time and occasion that Christ enters our lives is different for each of us. For most he will enter to bless us with something we were in need of. For others, like Simon, he enters Simon's life looking for his help. Today, consider how you may be called to walk along Christ to help him in saving the world.

Pause

All: I love you Jesus my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you, never permit me to separate myself

from you again, grant that I may love you always and do with me what you will.

Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Leader: The sixth station, Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

Response: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

Reflection: We have, in these last three stations, three beautiful examples of discipleship. Dedication, responsiveness and mercy. Veronica is known even less than Simon, but we know her name means 'true image'. Veronica is the true image of Christ, she does for him what he has done for countless others, to wipe away the dirt and muck, to touch what is deemed untouchable, to love the unlovable, and to give value to the valueless. Our acts of service and charity are for their own sake, they do not find their origin in us, they are the natural response for someone who is filled with love. Christ first loves us. We, in being his disciples cannot keep this love to ourselves, we must share it. When in the last week have we been like Veronica? In the week ahead how can we be more like Veronica?

Pause

All: I love you Jesus my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you, never permit me to separate myself from you again, grant that I may love you always and do with me what you will.

Seventh Station: Jesus falls for the second time

Leader: The seventh station, Jesus falls for the second time.
We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

Response: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: It was no messenger or angel, but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity, he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

Reflection: Despite the help and support of Simon, Jesus falls again. The tiredness and pain are really beginning to set in. How easy would it be for him to just give in, to die here? Or even to call upon his divinity and pull down those who strike him, to leave the pains of all behind. In our discipleship we can become easily jaded, we can feel that we can't go on. We may even feel that those who are walking with us are no help at all. In our reading Isaiah said it is the presence of God that redeemed them. That very presence is alive in the Church, in the sacraments, most especially in the Eucharist, in the priesthood, in the people of God, and wherever the Holy Spirit blows. Pope Francis teaches us everything we need, for our salvation is present in the Church, turn to her in your hour of need.

Pause

All: I love you Jesus my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you, never permit me to separate myself from you again, grant that I may love you always and do with me what you will.

Eighth Station: Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem

Leader: The seventh station, Jesus falls for the second time.
We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

Response: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed." Then they will begin to say to the mountains, "Fall on us"; and to the hills, "Cover us." For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?'

Reflection: Having hauled himself up from the floor, Jesus concern is not for himself but for his disciples. He goes to these women and comforts them. The greater tragedy for Jesus is not his passion but for those who do not know the love of God and greater still for those who reject it. The world rejected Jesus when he was physically present in it. Are we surprised that it rejects him now? Do we weep for those who do not know Christ? Do we pray for and love these brothers and sisters of ours? Jesus offers his struggles for them, as his disciples we should too.

Pause

All: I love you Jesus my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you, never permit me to separate myself from you again, grant that I may love you always and do with me what you will.

Ninth Station: Jesus falls for the third time

Leader: The ninth station, Jesus falls for the second time.
We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

Response: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: Our steps are made firm by the Lord, when he delights in our way; though we stumble, we shall not fall headlong, for the Lord holds us by the hand.

Reflection: Jesus is so close to the end of his journey but again his legs give way. How often are we in our journey, floored by a repetitive sin, the sin that brings us the most shame and guilt. St Paul summed this up well when he wrote 'I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.' The devil enjoys throwing rocks in

front of our path for us to stumble. He knows the ones which are best to hit us with to cause the most damage. The great lie that the devil tells us in temptation is we cannot resist, and in sin that we cannot be forgiven. Jesus shows us the opposite, we can resist, we can be forgiven. Do not dwell in our failings, let him pull you up and continue on your mission.

Pause

All: I love you Jesus my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you, never permit me to separate myself from you again, grant that I may love you always and do with me what you will.

Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his garments

Leader: The tenth station, Jesus is stripped of his garments.
We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

Response: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So, they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfil what the scripture says: 'They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my garment they cast lots.'

Reflection: With great indignity they treat the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. They leave him bare, naked, before the insults, spittle and stares of contempt. The brutal action of tearing from him the little he has left is shocking. We would never defile someone so personally. But what about our words or thoughts? What do we strip from people then, their position, their honour, their possessions, their dignity or character? Our discipleship should permeate our thoughts and our words, to resist gossip or uncharitable thoughts. It is easy to do external actions, but the call of discipleship is a complete transformation of our hearts and minds.

Pause

All: I love you Jesus my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you, never permit me to separate myself from you again, grant that I may love you always and do with me what you will.

Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the cross

Leader: The eleventh station, Jesus is nailed to the cross.
We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

Response: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' One of the criminals who hanged there kept deriding him

and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'

Leader: Even on the cross Jesus gains for himself another disciple. This disciple is not won by his miracles, preaching or healing. This disciple is won by Jesus' mercy. His unfailing love is the most attractive part of him. We are not called to walk upon water, to feed 5000 people or raise the dead. We are called to make disciples. To do this we need to live mercy, to love unconditionally. Even those we may think are furthest from the kingdom like this criminal, he was in fact much closer than the leaders and pharisees.

Pause

All: I love you Jesus my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you, never permit me to separate myself from you again, grant that I may love you always and do with me what you will.

Twelfth Station: Jesus is nailed to the cross

Leader: The twelfth station, Jesus dies on the cross.
We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

Response: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.' At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.' Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.

Pause and kneel

Leader: What we have just heard is the most pivotal moment in history. God died. The Son of God gave his life for sinners. What an extraordinary exchange, he who is life itself accepts death. He draws upon him every sin; every moment of despair and it dies with him. The power of sin and shame is consumed on the cross. The body and blood of Christ consumes all the brokenness of man and radiates salvation and hope for all. Yet in this moment, in this hill in Judea all seems lost. The tears and wails of his family and friends are the cries of abandonment and loss from every age. In our journey of discipleship there will be times when all seems lost, when there is no hope, and everything is gone. These times are in fact the most powerful, as all that we can offer is gone, we must rely on grace. For us looking back, this is the most

beautiful and wonderful moment, but in the moment, it seems the ugliness of the world has overcome.

Pause

All: I love you Jesus my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you, never permit me to separate myself from you again, grant that I may love you always and do with me what you will.

Thirteenth Station: Jesus is taken down from the cross

Leader: The thirteenth station, Jesus is taken down from the cross.

We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

Response: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so, he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews.

Reflection: Joseph of Arimathea, like St Joseph, is a silent disciple. Much is to be said about this silent disciple, this secret disciple. Our discipleship does not need to be brash and bold, in the face of others. Joseph's discipleship is not as well known or expressed as that of the 12. His is present when theirs is not. Nicodemus repairs in the Gospels also, he has been unheard of since the beginning of Jesus' ministry when he prophesied he would die like this. Nicodemus wasn't shocked by his death, he expected it. He, just like the magi brings myrrh to honour him. These two disciples performed the quietest, unnoticed task, with the greatest of love. Not all of us are disciples in the mould of Peter, Paul, James or John. Some of us should not be ashamed to live our discipleship as Joseph and Nicodemus do, in devoted acts of love for Christ.

Pause

All: I love you Jesus my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you, never permit me to separate myself from you again, grant that I may love you always and do with me what you will.

Fourteenth Station: Jesus is buried in the tomb

Leader: The fourteenth station, Jesus is taken down from the cross.

We adore you O Christ and we praise you.

Response: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader: Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary

Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where the body was laid.

Reflection: This should have been the end of Jesus of Nazareth, yet another insurgent struck down by the Roman Empire. A rebellious peasant in a backwater of the mightiest empire in history. It isn't though, we know this, this was no ordinary man, this was the God-Man. Death would have no power over him. Legions and guards, sealed tombs and sealed rooms, kings and emperors, dictators and politicians, country borders and centuries of time have had and will have no power over him. Pope Francis exhorts us not to be like those who sat staring at the tomb on Good Friday but to be like those who ran from it on Easter Sunday, filled with joy. We are an Easter people. The crux of Christianity is joy, how can it not be, our God loves us to the depths of death and hell, to the heights of heaven and the throne of the Most High, and every town and city of earth in between. We have the greatest reason to be happy than anyone else on earth, our God is not dead. As we approach our Easter celebrations let us remember it is not an empty duty, it is a joyous celebration. As we approach the Eucharist let us remember that it is not the dead body of Jesus in the tomb; it is the risen and glorious body of Christ and the hope for all nations.

Pause

All: I love you Jesus my love above all things, I repent with my whole heart for having offended you, never permit me to separate myself from you again, grant that I may love you always and do with me what you will.

Closing Prayer

Leader: Let us pray,

Loving Lord, as we leave your tomb having walked with you on your journey to Calvary, let us not leave with downcast faces or sad hearts, but filled with the hope of the Easter to come. In the moments of our despair help us to see that this is only Good Friday evening and that you have not, and will not, abandon us. Help us to leave behind at your tomb all our stresses, fears and anxieties trusting you have overcome them all. We pray this in your most holy and powerful name.

Response: Amen

An Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be are prayed for the intentions of the Holy Father.

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

Response: Amen.