**Good Friday- April 2, 2021**

**Zion, Philipsburg, St. Peters, Linwood**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Almighty God, look with loving mercy on your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, to be given over to the hands of sinners, and to suffer death on the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **Amen.**

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 52:13--53:12**

A reading from Isaiah.

13See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.14Just as there were many who were astonished at him—so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals—  
 15so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him;  
 for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

53:1Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? 2For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.  
4Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.5But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. 6All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.  
7He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.  
8By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future?  
 For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. 9They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. 10Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper.  
 11Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. 12Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The word of the Lord.

**GOSPEL: John 18:1--19:42**

In the interest of saving ink, I ask that you read the gospel from our bible at home.

Note that the audio recording, has the hymn Go To Dark Gethsemane (ELW 347) interspersed within the reading. If you have a hymn book at home, please spend some time reflecting on the hymn.

**Sermon**

Brother Charles de Foucald was born into a wealthy family in France in 1858. By the age of 6, he was an orphan. His life was full of sadness and grief and as he grew up he struggled with his faith and turned away from God. But God never turned away from him. Years later after a stint in the army, and time spent as an explorer and geographer, he began to question his views on God’s non-existence. In his travels he had met many people of different faiths ad he marvelled at the friendship and joy he received in meeting them. He wrote in a letter dated August 1901, “As soon as I believed that God existed, I understood that I could do nothing else but live for him alone.”[[1]](#footnote-1) He followed his heart and became a Trappist monk, studying the words and work of Jesus Christ, even living in Nazareth and working as a gardener for many years. He then travelled to Northern Africa where he spent the last 15 years of his life emulating the life of Jesus Christ gaining the love, respect, and trust of the Tuareg people. He was killed in 1916 during a hostage-taking, a victim of violence during the first World War. He wrote the Prayer of Abandonment[[2]](#footnote-2) imagining it on the lips of a dying and crucified Jesus, so it feels appropriate that I share it with you today:

Let us pray,

Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will.

Whatever you may do, I thank you: I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures – I wish no more than this, O Lord.

Into your hands I commend my soul: I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,

for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands without reserve, and with boundless confidence, for you are my Father. Amen

         Jesus knew that his hour had indeed come on the night of his betrayal. He shared a meal and washed the disciple’s feet in an act of servanthood and unconditional love. Our gospel reading today takes us into the hours of Jesus’ final breaths. He is found guilty, he is beaten, he carries his cross to the Place of the Skull or Golgotha where he was nailed to and razed on the cross between two bandits, one on each side of him.

In order to fulfil scripture, he asks for a drink, and a jar of sour wine is raised to his lips. He takes one last drink and states “it is finished.” There was no cry of despair or grief, he simply bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Jesus spoke his final words not out of fear or remorse, not out of a feeling of abandonment or doom. His crucifixion in John was not an accident, it was the completion of Jesus’ mission on earth. He had finished what he needed to do, he had rescued and freed humanity that had fallen into the depths of sin and death. In his death, he drew humanity into the abundant life and love of God, the unconditional agape love of God. He willingly went to the cross, with confidence showing his love for his Father and humankind. This was the mission that Jesus was born for, this was the mission that Jesus fulfilled, this was the victory of unconditional love over the powers of oppression and hate in the world. This is the glory of God manifested in Jesus Christ through the cross. May we live into these words with confidence and grace for now and always. Amen

**HYMN OF THE DAY Were You There**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvmM6zoPGGI**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvmM6zoPGGI)

**BIDDING PRAYER**

Let us pray, brothers and sisters, for the holy church throughout the world. *Silent prayer.*

Almighty and eternal God, you have shown your glory to all nations in Jesus Christ.

By your Holy Spirit guide the church especially in this time when not all can gather in person. Help it continue to persevere in faith, to proclaim your name, and bring the good news of salvation in Christ to all people.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for Susan and Michael our bishops, for our pastors in the NVMA and TRMA, for all servants of the church, and for all the people of God, especially pastoral caregivers and all ministries of healing. *Silent prayer.*

Almighty and eternal God, your Spirit guides the church and makes it holy.

Strengthen and uphold our bishops, pastors, other ministers, and lay leaders.

Keep them in health and safety for the good of the church, and help each of us in our various vocations to do faithfully the work to which you have called us.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those who question their faith. *Silent prayer.*

Almighty and eternal God, Your faith in us is ever sure, even when some doubt your presence. Be gentle with those those who wonder where you are. Assure us that your faithfulness persists, and that you make room for questions and uncertainty.

Give us solid ground on which to place our feet.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those preparing for baptism. *Silent prayer.*

Almighty and eternal God, you continue to bless the church. Increase the faith and understanding of those preparing for baptism. Give them new birth as your children and keep them in the faith and communion of your holy church.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. A**men.**

Let us pray for our sisters and brothers who share our faith in Jesus Christ. *Silent prayer.*

Almighty and eternal God, you give your church unity. Look with favor on all who follow Jesus your Son. Make all the baptized one in the fullness of faith, and keep us united in the fellowship of love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. *Silent prayer.*

Almighty and eternal God, gather into your embrace all those who call out to you under different names. Bring an end to inter-religious strife, and make us more faithful witnesses of the love made known to us in your Son.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those who do not believe in God. *Silent prayer.*

Almighty and eternal God, you created humanity so that all may long to know you and find peace in you.

Grant that all may recognize the signs of your love and grace in the world and in the lives of Christians, and gladly acknowledge you as the one true God.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for God's creation. *Silent prayer.*

Almighty and eternal God, you are the creator of a magnificent universe.

Hold all the worlds in the arms of your care and bring all things to fulfillment in you.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for a world in need of peace and harmony and for those who serve in public office, especially for wisdom and foresight in these troubled times.

*Silent prayer.*

Almighty and eternal God, within our lives and relationships, and in communities around the world, we face conflict and antagonism.

We pray for places where violence and cruelty seem to win the day; for countries where war cuts down innocent bystanders; where divisions lead to the abuse of power and belittling of opponents; where unreasonable force is used to quell dissent.

Send your Spirit to work among troubled nations and give us peace in our time;

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us pray for those in need of healing and strength. *Silent prayer.*

Almighty and eternal God, The world has been confusing and bleak during the pandemic, but you pierce the darkness with hope and renewed vision.

We give you thanks for new discoveries to ease suffering, for wisdom and resources shared, for courageous service that restores hope and brings healing.

As we mark Jesus’ death this day, we pray for those who are ill and dying,

and for those who are bereaved or feel any burden of loss.

Renew our trust in your resurrecting love.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Finally, let us pray for all those things for which our Lord would have us ask.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,**

**hallowed be thy name,**

**thy kingdom come,**

**thy will be done,**

**on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;**

**and forgive us our trespasses,**

**as we forgive those**

**who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,**

**and the power, and the glory,**

**forever and ever. Amen.**

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1. Jesus Caritas,” Charles de Foucauld - Brother Charles of Jesus 1858 - 1916 - His spiritual journey | Jesus Caritas, accessed April 1, 2021, http://www.jesuscaritas.info/jcd/fr/charles-de-foucauld-brother-charles-jesus-1858-1916-his-spiritual-journey. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Jesus Caritas,” A school of life: the 'Prayer of Abandon' of Charles de Foucauld | Jesus Caritas, accessed April 1, 2021, http://www.jesuscaritas.info/jcd/fr/school-life-prayer-abandon-charles-de-foucauld. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)