

Holy Week & Easter 2026  
Christ Church, Windsor, NS  
*Fr. David Curry*



Giotto di Bondone (c.1267-1337)

“A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed”

Palm Sunday: "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

And so it begins and ends, in the ending that never ends. *Palm Sunday* marks the beginning of *Holy Week* yet looks to the end or purpose of the journey in Christ's Resurrection but only through the *Cross* and *Passion* of Christ. It is really a week-long liturgy. We greet Christ as he enters Jerusalem with cries of "*Hosanna*". But our cries of rejoicing quickly turn to shouts of "Let him be crucified". Yet the shouts of violence give place to sorrow and sadness. Are we to be left simply in the sorrows of our hearts? Or does sorrow or contrition lead to the possibilities of repentance? *Holy Week* takes us from *the cries of rejoicing* to *the sorrows of our hearts* but then to *the glorious songs of Alleluias*. Such is the pageant and wonder of *Holy Week*, if we have the hearts and minds to think and feel; in short, to be pierced.

It has been my custom to take a Scriptural passage as the matrix for all our *Holy Week* and Easter meditations. Simeon's prophecy, which we heard at *Candlemas*, anticipates the Passion and its meaning. He says to Mary, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;" then to her he says, that "a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Mary, as the *Annunciation* this past week shows, is the source of Christ's pure and true humanity. As Augustine teaches, she is the symbol of the Church. Her vocation is the vocation of our humanity in its purity and truth: "Be it unto me according to thy word." That means our complete attention to all of the words of the Passion as indicated in Simeon's prophecy. Only so can we feel the thought of the deep meaning of Christ's Passion; in an image it means being pierced.

There are, the poet George Herbert says, "two vast spacious things" that we are meant to learn and contemplate, "yet few there are that sound them." What are they? "Sinne and Love". The challenge of *Holy Week* for us is to sound the depths of sin and love in our own hearts as revealed through Christ's Passion. *Holy Week* is the spectacle of our betrayals, *on the one hand*, and the spectacle of the redemptive love of Christ, *on the other hand*. We are bidden to contemplate the dialectical motions, the to-and-fro of our hearts, in going from *joy* to *sorrow* and then to *glory*. *Hosanna, Crucify, Alleluia*.

We are much on display in these events, caught in the conflicting storms and emotions of our hearts and in the vain imaginations and confusions of our minds in myriads of ways. We are in the story. We discover the disorders of our lives individually and collectively. Somehow it belongs to our good to contemplate the destructive force of human folly and foolishness, for only so can we participate in the serious joy of our redemption. In other words, the events of this week, liturgically and sacramentally re-enacted and re-presented, recall us to a joy that is greater than the ups and downs of our hearts and the destructive follies of our vanities and pretensions. We are recalled to a joy that is deep and abiding, holy and true, precisely because there is something beyond ourselves which redeems us from ourselves. Contemplating our betrayals of the journey to Jerusalem belongs to the journey. In other words, it belongs to our good.

In contemplating sin and love, we are to be *doubly pierced*; pierced in sorrow and pierced in joy. They are the necessary conditions of our coming to glory, the glory of Christ's *Resurrection*, but only through the *Passion* in the intensity of *all four Gospel accounts of the Passion of Christ*. We immerse ourselves in the fullness of the *Passion*: *Matthew* today, *Mark* on *Holy Monday & Holy Tuesday*, *Luke* on *Holy Wednesday & Maundy Thursday*, *John* on *Good Friday*. The pageant of the *Passion* in all its fullness reveals us to ourselves in all our shortcomings and follies but only so as to gather us into the love of Christ that redeems us. That is to know ourselves even as we are known in the greater love of Christ. We only learn the lessons of sin through the love of God.

This is Herbert's point. We can only learn sin and love through the *Passion* of Christ which reveals those "two vast spacious things" in their intensity and fullness. He points to Christ's agony in Gethsemane which shows the reality of sin as felt and experienced *inwardly* in Christ's soul even as it will be felt and experienced *outwardly* in his body on the Cross. The Crucifixion makes visible, he suggests, not only the vicious and destructive nature of our disordered humanity but also the greater depth and wonder of divine love. Love is the total self-giving nature of God given to us precisely through the effects of our sins made visible on the Cross.

"Love," he says in a moving image, "is that liquor sweet, and most divine,/which my God feels as bloud; but I, as wine." The image belongs exactly to what we behold in the figure of Christ crucified. For out of his *Passion* and *Death* flows life and the means of our abiding in that everlasting life. Christ is pierced on the Cross by the soldier's spear to confirm his death, yet out of his side flows water and blood, symbolic of the sacraments of baptism and communion. They are the means of our participation in the work of human regeneration and redemption accomplished in Christ's *Passion*.

Throughout this week, "[we] shall look on him whom [we] pierced," as John notes in his *Passion* read on *Good Friday*, quoting *Zechariah*. The thoughts of our hearts shall be revealed through the spectacle of Mary pierced in her soul with sorrow and with love at the sufferings of Christ. May our souls pierced in sorrow for our sins be also pierced in joy for Christ's love. That, I pray, shall be our holy week.

"A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the  
thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Fr. David Curry  
Palm Sunday, 2026

Holy Monday: "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

"In all their affliction he was afflicted," Isaiah says, words which have shaped the Christian understanding of Christ's Passion and its life of prayer. Consider the following prayer (BCP,p.54) and see how it builds on Isaiah and the logic of the Passion.

Almighty God, who art afflicted in the afflictions of thy people: Regard with thy tender compassion those in anxiety and distress; bear their sorrows, and their cares, supply all their manifold needs; and help both them and us to put our whole trust and confidence in thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Passion of Christ is only possible through the Incarnation, God made man in Jesus Christ. His sufferings, by a kind of metaphorical transposition, are known in God; technically or theologically, this is the *communicatio idiomatum*, the interchange of the properties of divine and human without compromise to the distinctive integrity of each. God in himself is "without body, parts, or passions" (*Art I. Thirty-nine Articles*). "God is love," as John teaches. That divine love transcends all the limited forms of human love but rather than negating them seeks their perfection and truth as found in him. This is the work of the Passion. It is, I think, the meaning of *our being pierced* in contemplating what Christ *wills to suffer* for us. It is illustrated in the moving scenes of *The Beginning of the Passion according to St. Mark on Monday in Holy Week*.

It begins with the scene of an unnamed woman breaking "an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard," a precious and expensive aromatic and amber essential oil derived from a mid-Asian plant of the honeysuckle family. "She brake the box, and poured it on his head," Mark tells us. Alabaster is a translucent stone often used in carvings particularly of the human form. The breaking of the box, Austin Farrer notes, suggests the breaking open of the body of Christ from which his blood is outpoured. Here the breaking of the alabaster box serves as the anointing of Jesus: a moving image of an extravagance of love outpoured by the woman who sees something precious and holy in Christ. Yet her action excites the opposite: indignation, resentment, and complaint about wasting the ointment which "might have been sold for more than three hundred pieces of silver, and have been given to the poor." In short, "they murmured against her."

It suggests a conflict of goods not unlike our culture and world as measured in economic terms. What Jesus says in response is particularly revealing. "Let her alone," for what she has done is "a good work on me". It is not that the poor don't matter - human compassion towards others is not to be overlooked. "For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; but me ye have not always," he says, indicating his Passion and Death in the body of his humanity. Yet he explains the deeper meaning that belongs to the woman's action. "She hath done what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying." What she has done "shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

She has been pierced, we might say, moved with love for Christ in anticipation of his death and burial. Yet her action is seen negatively by those who are blind to the greater good of human redemption. The rest of *The Beginning of the Passion* highlights the story

of human ignorance and betrayal in such scenes as at *the Last Supper*; at *Gethsemane* where Peter, James and John are unable to watch with Jesus in his time of prayer in sorrow and anticipation of his death; his *betrayal by the kiss of Judas* and his *being taken captive* and brought before the *Sanhedrin* who seek his death but find no cause in him yet give way to false witnesses and *condemn him to death*. The thoughts of many hearts are revealed, to be sure.

Most tellingly and movingly, the reading ends with Peter's threefold denial of even knowing Christ. For when the cock crew, "Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him. Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." Remembering Jesus' words, Peter is *inwardly pierced*, his conscience convicted. Mark concludes with a simple economy of words, "when he thought thereon, he wept."

His weeping is an outpouring of sorrow and contrition that complements the outpouring of the precious ointment from the broken alabaster jar. Recalling the words of Christ moves Peter to an awareness of his betrayals of Christ's love. "Take with you words, and return to the Lord," as *Hosea* says in the Office lessons on this day. Peter's heart is revealed to him in two ways. He is pierced at once by sorrow and by love, "afflicted in the afflictions" that are already suffered by Christ for him and for us.

"A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the  
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Fr. David Curry  
Monday in Holy Week 2026

Holy Tuesday: "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

The lesson read at Communion on *Tuesday in Holy Week* is the *third* of the *four* so-called *Suffering Servant Songs* in *Isaiah*. It is the only one read in the *eucharistic* readings this week. At *Evening Prayer* on *Palm Sunday*, the *fourth* of the *Servant Songs* was read (*Isaiah* 52.13-53.end). In today's office of *Morning Prayer*, the *first* of *Servant Songs*, *Isaiah*, 42. 1-9, was read. The third song will be read again at *Evening Prayer* on *Good Friday*. In the Christian understanding, the *suffering servant* is both *Israel* collectively speaking and the unity of *all human suffering* concentrated in the person of Christ. The songs belong to the revealing of "the thoughts of many hearts" and thus to our *being pierced in our souls*.

*The Continuation of the Passion according to St. Mark* depicts the trial of Christ at the hands of Pilate who gives in to the wishes of the people who seek his crucifixion. We hear again the cries of "crucify" even though Pilate knows that the chief priests of Israel "have moved the people" against Jesus. He has him scourged or beaten and delivered to be crucified. It is a betrayal of human justice in the name of convenience and complicity with the mob, a betrayal of truth and human compassion. Such is the madness of crowds.

What follows are the indignities of being mocked by the Roman soldiers before being led out to be crucified. Simon, a Cyrenian, is *compelled* by them "to bear his cross." Not freely and willingly but under compulsion. He is crucified and cruelly scorned and berated on the Cross by the people, by the chief priests and scribes. Their words of insult mock the idea of "Christ, the King of Israel," even as the words of his accusation, "The King of the Jews," are superscribed on the Cross. If all this were not enough to disturb us, "they that were crucified with him reviled him" too. We behold him whom we, in these aspects of our humanity, have betrayed and nailed to the Cross.

All this is what he suffers and suffers *silently* before Pilate and on the Cross. *Mark* then tells us that "there was darkness over the whole land from the sixth hour to the ninth hour," something seen, as it were, that is symbolic of the darkness of men's hearts. "At the ninth hour," *Mark*, like *Matthew*, gives us Christ's cry of dereliction. It is the only word from the Cross in their accounts of the *Passion*. "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?", interpreted as "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" These words from *Psalms* 22 cry out simply to God and not, as in *Luke*, to God as Father.

They express something of the inexpressible meaning of Christ's suffering that belongs to his coming to do the will of him who sent him. The suffering is something experienced in the body but in ways far beyond our comprehension. In a similar sense, we both know and do not know what one another actually feels in their souls and bodies. There is a sense in which *all suffering is at once universal and individual*. How much more so in Christ who wills to bear in his perfect humanity what belongs to the conditions of our fallen humanity? This only heightens the intensity of his cry of dereliction that voices the dark, dark reality of human sin as the denial of the truth of God. This word shows the intensity of his being pierced for us in the meaning of our sins and his love for us.

But us? We see the darkness, as it were, and we hear the insults, mockery, and betrayals of justice and compassion. But even more we see and hear Christ Crucified in the

extremities of suffering. We see and hear *ourselves* in the shouts and words hurled against him. *Holy Week* reminds us that we are all part of the mob, all part of the betrayals of justice and human feeling; all implicated in the mess of our inhumanity.

Yet there remains a lingering sense that, perhaps, there is something more to this person suffering on the Cross, and, by extension, more to us. Mistaking his words, “*Eloi, Eloi,*” one person “that stood by” thought that he was calling upon Elijah and so gave Jesus a sponge full of vinegar to drink, wondering “whether Elijah will come to take him down.” It is an interesting moment that immediately precedes Jesus “crying with a loud voice and giving up his spirit”. He dies and at that moment “the veil of the temple,” *Mark* tells us, “was rent in twain from the top to the bottom,” symbolic of the betrayal of God’s covenant with Israel in the death of Christ. This is an important spiritual point about Jesus in relation to Israel, to Jesus as the *suffering servant* in the *totality* of suffering that belongs to Israel’s vocation “*as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations.*” But the temple is in Jerusalem, in the city, some distance from Calvary.

All these things reveal aspects of the disorders and confusions of our fallen humanity *to ourselves*; in short, they pierce *us* in beholding the one who is pierced and cries out in his experience of suffering and in the agony of *the aloneness of his suffering*. Yet *Mark* ends his account with the witness of the *centurion*, a Roman soldier, not an Israelite. He beholds Christ crucified - after all he can know nothing about the rending of the veil of the temple in Jerusalem. “He saw that he so cried out, and gave up his spirit.” In seeing Christ pierced and crying out in his agony, the centurion is moved in his spirit and says, “Truly this man was the Son of God.” This is faith born out of the spectacle of suffering.

He has been pierced or moved inwardly to see in the body and words of Christ a greater truth. To see in his crucified humanity the truth of Christ as the Son of God; in short, to be pierced by love to see love. Surely that is the purpose of *Holy Tuesday* for us as well.

“A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

Fr. David Curry  
Tuesday in Holy Week, 2026

Holy Wednesday: "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

The Epistle reading for *Wednesday in Holy Week* recalls and completes the Epistle reading for *Passion Sunday* from *Hebrews 9*. It centers our attention on Christ's *Passion* as the "forgiveness of sins" through "the shedding of his blood" in the sacrifice of himself.. "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness," and "now, once for all, at the end of time, he hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." It offers a way of understanding theologically just what it means to say that "Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant, [and] that by means of death" so that "they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." This theological understanding is complemented by the *Passion according to St. Luke*, read today and tomorrow.

*Luke*, in Dante's famous phrase, is "*scriba mansuetudinis Christi*," the scribe of the gentleness of Christ. This, wonderfully illustrated in *The Beginning of the Passion According to St. Luke*. *Luke*, helps us to feel something of the meaning of Christ's *Passion* psychologically, emotionally, and personally, and what it means for us. In other words, *Luke* gives us a sense of the *inner struggles, turmoil* and *dynamic* of the *Passion* in Christ himself in the movement towards the Cross.

*Luke* shows what is at work in the forces of evil that seek to kill Jesus especially with respect to the *intentions* of the chief priests and scribes and the role of Judas in Christ's betrayal. Satan, *Luke* tells us, "entered into Judas" who conspires with the chief priests and captains to betray Jesus unto them. Satan is the tempter, the devil, who as a created being is good but exists in denial of his own being. He is, as Augustine nicely puts it, "an evil good". He shows us the radical nature of evil as the contradiction and negation of the good upon which it utterly depends, the evil to which we concede so easily.

*Luke* tells us about the *Last Supper* but in greater detail about the mindset of Christ and his awareness of the suffering which is to follow. *Luke* gives a full account of the giving of himself in the bread and the cup of the Passover as meaning his sacrifice through betrayal. "Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth is with me on the table." It is not just about Judas. *Luke* also anticipates Peter's betrayal in terms of Satan desiring to control him. He foretells not just the circumstances of the betrayal but also Peter's conversion and later mission and leadership. Thus *Luke* provides an insight into both the humanity and the divinity of Christ that belong to his being "the Mediator of the new covenant." This builds upon the images of the old covenant about forgiveness and sacrifice recapitulated and transformed in Christ's sacrifice.

Two scenes in the beginning of *Luke's Passion* highlight his literary and gentle touch: Christ in Gethsemane and Christ's betrayal by Peter. *Luke* allows us to feel something of the inward force of the *Passion* as anticipated by Christ. It is captured in his prayer to the Father that "nevertheless, not my will but thine be done", an echo of both Mary's *fiat mihi* and the Lord's Prayer. In a moving and graphic image, he conveys the agony of Gethsemane in Christ "pray[ing] more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." The image complements the idea that there is no forgiveness of sins, no redemption, "without the shedding of blood." Blood is symbolic

of the life-force of created beings. *Luke* shows us the inner struggle of his humanity, pierced by human sin and pierced by divine love.

Forgiveness is shown too in terms of healing such as the healing of the servant of the high priest in the scene of violence that follows Christ being betrayed in Gethsemane by the kiss of Judas and in the struggle between the other disciples and the servants of the high priest. As *Luke* records, Jesus says “this is your hour, and the power of darkness.”

The last scene is Peter’s betrayal of Christ. The cock crew while Peter spoke the third time. *Luke*, in a powerful and artistic touch, simply tells us that “the Lord *turned* and *looked upon* Peter.” That look convicts Peter’s conscience. His thoughts are revealed to him, “and Peter remembered the word of the Lord.” He is pierced inwardly and moved to sorrow and contrition simply by the look and the words of Christ. “And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.” This is the beginning of his conversion, of his being recalled to who he is in Christ. Yet it can only happen through the process of sounding those “two vast spacious things, Sinne and Love,” particularly as imaged by *Luke*.

*Wednesday in Holy Week* anticipates the *Triduum Sacrum*, the three great holy Days of *Holy Week*, perhaps most powerfully in the service of *Tenebrae*, meaning shadows or darkness. *Tenebrae* is the Psalm Office of Mattins traditionally sung the evening before each of the three holy days. In every way we immerse ourselves in the meaning of the *Passion* through the language and images of the Scriptures. Only so might we be pierced in sorrow and pierced by love.

“A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

Fr. David Curry  
Wednesday in Holy Week, *Tenebrae* 2026

Maundy Thursday: "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

There is a remarkable complexity to *Maundy Thursday*. There is, of course, *The Continuation of the Passion according to St. Luke* which provides three of the Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross. "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" is the *first* word. The *second* is Christ's word to the one who was crucified with him who said, "Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." Jesus responded, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

*Luke's third* word becomes the seventh word in the devotional tradition of the Last Words of the Crucified developed by the indigenous Peruvian Jesuit priest, Fr. Alonso Messio Bedoya, in Lima in the late 17th century. From there the practice travelled to Europe ultimately shaping the liturgical and musical devotions for both Protestant and Catholic Churches. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." With *Luke*, the words of the Crucified *begin* and *end* with the prayer of the Son to the Father in the Spirit of their eternal love.

There are as well other devotional and symbolic events on this day such as the washing of the feet, the giving of the Royal Maundy, the King's coin, to the poor, the stripping of the Altar, and the watching at the Altar of Repose with Christ in Gethsemane. But most crucially, perhaps, *Maundy Thursday* recalls the Institution of the Holy Eucharist on the night, this very night, in which Christ is betrayed.

All these events highlight two themes: service and sacrifice in humility and love. Dramatic and moving, the liturgies of *Maundy Thursday* draw us into the vast and spacious mysteries of sin and love, as George Herbert suggested. They reveal to us our hearts of sin and they pierce our souls in sorrow and in love. They convict our consciences and move us to acts of compassion and service to others. All as grounded in the Passion and in the forms of our participation in the Passion of Christ. The three last words in *Luke's Passion* contribute to our growing into the mystery of Christ.

You may have noticed the similarity of expression between the *Palm Sunday* Collect used throughout *Holy Week* and the opening paragraph of the Prayer of Consecration in the Prayer Book. God, out of his "tender love towards mankind," the Collect prays, "hast sent thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross." In the Eucharistic Prayer "Almighty God, our heavenly Father" out of his "tender mercy" gave his "only Son Jesus Christ to take our nature upon him, and to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption." The Collect and the Prayer complement each other and emphasize the necessary and inseparable connection between the *Incarnation* and the *Passion*, especially on this day, and as centered in the Eucharist.

It is known as *Maundy Thursday*. *Maundy* is the englishing of the Latin *mandatum*, meaning commandment, the *novum mandatum*, the new commandment. "A new commandment, I give unto you that you love one another," Jesus says. It means to love as Christ has loved us even while we were sinners. It signals the whole meaning and purpose of *Holy Week* as concentrated for us in the Passion of Christ and the means of our participation in his Passion sacramentally.

We confront our humanity in all its disarray and perhaps most tellingly in the pageant of the betrayals of our hearts made visible in our betrayals of Christ. Yet the Passion, certainly and compellingly on *Maundy Thursday*, reveals the greater love of Christ for us in two ways: his Passion and Sacrifice and the means of our participation through the institution of the Holy Eucharist. It is a radical act of love in the face of all human sin and evil. Jesus recalls and recapitulates the ancient Passover meal but radically transforms its meaning by identifying himself with the bread and the wine.

He is “the Mediator of the new covenant” who builds upon the *Exodus* story of liberation and redemption by means of *his body broken for us* and *his blood outpoured for us*, “the new covenant in my blood,” as he says. “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come.” Out of Christ’s death on the Cross - his body broken and his blood outpoured - flow water and blood, symbolic of the sacraments but only as the ordained means of our participating in his Death and Resurrection. God is life and out of the death of God in Christ’s sacrifice flows the means of our life in him.

The words of the Cross in *Luke’s* account teach us about that life as love in the motions of the Son to the Father: “Father, forgive them ... Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” At the Last Supper, “he carried himself in his own hands,” as Augustine puts it, carrying us in all our sins into the eternal and everlasting love of the Trinity. As we shall see on *Good Friday*, he has, as the old Gospel hymn says, “the whole world in his hands.” The hands that are nailed to the Cross reach out across the centuries to embrace us in his love. His love outpoured in death is eternal life.

Holy Communion gathers us into his death and life for us. “Discerning the Lord’s body” at Mass speaks to the realities of his Passion and Death for us without which his life cannot live in us. It means being pierced in sorrow for our sins and pierced in love for his grace and mercy.

“A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

Fr. David Curry  
Maundy Thursday, 2026

Good Friday: "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Simeon's prophetic words to Mary follow immediately upon his prophecy about Jesus. "Behold, *this child* is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against." It speaks to the meaning of *Good Friday* not just for "many in Israel" but also for the *Gentiles*, as the *Nunc Dimittis* makes clear. Christ is "a light to lighten the Gentiles, / and the glory of thy people Israel." *Holy Week* has presented us with the spectacle of all human sin and cruelty as visited upon Jesus Christ. It is a week in which "the thoughts of many hearts" are brought to light, and if we have hearts to feel what we see and hear, our souls are surely *doubly pierced*: in grief and sorrow for our sins, and in joy and gladness for the love of God in Christ. But only because *he is pierced* by us and for us on the Cross. The question is whether we will be *pierced inwardly* by what we behold and see. If so, then this day will rightly be "Good" Friday for us individually and collectively.

We behold Christ crucified and we hear the last words of Christ on the Cross. In the devotional tradition of *The Seven Last Words of Christ Crucified* as developed in Lima, Peru, in the 17th century by an indigenous Peruvian Jesuit priest, Fr. Alonso Messio Bedoya, and transported from there to Europe and then back again to the Americas, the last words begin and end with the prayer of the Son to the Father in the bond of their mutual and eternal love in the Spirit, words found in Luke's account of the Passion. Tonight in *The Solemn Liturgy of Good Friday*, we hear and participate in *The Passion according to St. John*.

*John* provides *three* of Christ's last words just as *Luke* gives us *three* words of Christ. *Matthew* and *Mark* give us the same *one* word, Christ's cry of dereliction. In Bedoya's ordering, *Luke* gives us the *first*, *second*, and *seventh* word; *John*, the *third*, *fifth* and *sixth* word, *Matthew* and *Mark*, the *fourth* word. Tonight we hear the last word of Christ in *John's* account: "It is finished." It is the only word from the Cross without reference to anyone personally, without a personal pronoun, as it were. It is a kind of objective summary or conclusion. The Greek makes it clear that it signals the sense of accomplishment, an end or purpose achieved; a *telos*.

What is finished then? Simply the whole purpose of going up to Jerusalem, namely the work of human redemption through the Passion of Christ understood as accomplishing the divine will for our good, the good that belongs to the goodness of God himself. All that belongs to the work of human redemption has been accomplished in Christ's sacrifice. It is simply *done* and *done for all time, for all and for all of suffering creation*.

What is finished is at once cosmic and individual, universal and personal, for all who will it, meaning all who seek what God seeks for us. "Salvation to all that will is nigh," as John Donne puts it, "that all, which always is all everywhere." He is playing on the different senses of *all* - "all that will" meaning human beings, and "all" meaning the *omnipresence*, *omnipotence*, and *eternity of God*, the "all" that is God himself. "It is finished" means that Christ has gathered all the fragments of our broken lives and world into unity in himself with the Father and the Holy Spirit. All is complete.

There is *nothing* left to be done. The divine will for our salvation is accomplished fully and completely in Christ's sacrifice. As one of the *Good Friday* anthems puts it: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." What greater good could there be? Yet we only see this *darkly* through the Passion and Death of Christ. It is *all there* but *we aren't all there* in a spiritual and metaphorical sense. Though fully accomplished *for us* in Christ's sacrifice, it is not yet fully realised *in us*. Justified in Christ we are not fully perfected or sanctified in Christ.

"It is finished", Jesus says, and dies, but are we finished? John tells us that after Jesus dies he is pierced by the soldier's spear to confirm his death. But then out of his side flows water and blood signifying life and resurrection. The life of God experiences the full reality of sin and death in Christ crucified out of whose death comes eternal life. The divine life embraces our death and already makes it a means of life.

One of John Donne's poems, perhaps one of his last, though probably written in 1623 during a time of serious illness, subsequently set to music by his contemporary, John Hilton, is entitled "A Hymn to God the Father." A slightly different version is entitled "To Christ." A meditation on prayer and suffering, it partly plays on his name '*Donne/done*' and on his wife's name, Ann More, '*More/more*'. "Wilt thou forgive that sin, where I begun ... though it were done before? ... that sin, through which I run, And do run still? ... that sin which I have won others to sin, and made my sin their door? ... that sin which I did shun a year or two; but wallowed in, a score?" he asks God precisely out of his consciousness of sin and suffering. For "when thou hast done, thou hast not done/ For I have more," meaning more sins.

Our sins, it seems, are endless and ongoing, a kind of *schlechte unendlichkeit*, a bad infinity of desires in endless disarray (with apologies to Hegel).. But the radical point of *Good Friday* is that Christ's sacrifice embraces and overcomes *all sin and suffering* - past, present, and future - as such nothing more can be done than that which has been done. *It is all*. Christ's suffering embraces all the sufferings of our world in all times and places. Thus Donne seeks God's mercy at his own end when he can envision and pray "that at my death thy son/ Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore:/ And, having done that, thou hast done,/ I fear no more." What underlies the Passion is already the life of the Resurrection, the life of God which knows no end.

He is pierced on the Cross that we may be pierced in sorrow for our sins and pierced in love for the love of Christ made visible on the Cross. To see and feel this is the *good* of *Good Friday*. We are pierced and moved to repentance and love.

"A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the  
thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Fr. David Curry  
Good Friday, 2026

Holy Saturday: "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

The quiet and silence of *Holy Saturday* is in marked contrast to the noise and confusion of the *Passion of Christ* on the previous days of *Holy Week*, especially *Good Friday*. We have had our way in the folly of sin and evil, thinking that we could kill God. All the forces of sin and evil have spent their force. All is done.

Not just by us, but in Christ. What remains is what belongs to the special quality of *Holy Saturday*. That is the further and deeper contemplation of *sin and love* which has been our *Holy Week* theme. What belongs to this morning is a profound awakening to the credal doctrine of *The Descent into Hell* as the final chord in *the Symphony of the Passion*. We have done all that sin and evil can do but God is not done. Already we have seen that eternal life flows out of the side of Christ crucified and dead.

The fullest sense of that life is seen in the lessons for *Holy Saturday* morning that highlights the universality and completeness of Christ's sacrifice. It is for all. His suffering gathers into itself *all the forms of human suffering*, past, present, and future. His death gathers *all our deaths* into himself. *Holy Saturday* recalls the peace of Paradise but in another register. It is the peace, not as the world gives, but only as God gives, a peace that comes out of all our discord and disarray, out of all our evil and what it means in terms of suffering and death. Death is our way yet God makes life out of death, out of our folly and pretense of thinking that we can control and remake the very world of which we are a part, the folly of presuming that we are God.

*Holy Saturday* bids us wait at the tomb of Christ and contemplate the fury and rage of ourselves and its consequences. All is done and we are left empty. All our rage and spite is past and gone but can't simply be ignored or forgotten. But *1 Peter* recalling *Zechariah* - yet again, for *John* ended his account of the *Passion* with *Zechariah's* words about our looking upon him whom we pierced - indicates something more that belongs to the radical meaning of Christ's crucifixion. It is universal so much so that Christ goes and preaches to the spirits in prison, in *Sheol* or *Hades* or *Hell* understood not as the image of punishment but as an image of the place of the dead. He preaches to them in order to bring them to himself.

This is captured in Eastern Christian Iconography in what is known as "the harrowing of Hell," a kind of gathering up or rescuing of the souls of all who have gone before Christ in the pageant of revelation in what Christians call the Old Testament. Images from the Hebrew Scriptures have been a powerful part of the *Passion* story which in some sense is incomprehensible apart from them. *Holy Saturday* belongs to the transformation of the images of scripture in the figure of Christ and in the radical meaning of human redemption accomplished in his sacrifice. The icon shows Christ reaching down into the grave and bringing up Adam and Eve and by extension the whole host of the children of Abraham, symbolic of our humanity.

That he goes and preaches to them is significant. Not only is Christ's *Passion* and *Death* for all but it testifies to the truth of our humanity. His going and preaching recalls them and us to the truth of our humanity as made in the image of God precisely as rational

beings even in spite of the folly of sin and disobedience. But our sin and disobedience cannot trump God's will and purpose for our humanity. That is just our folly.

The Epistle from *1 Peter* along with the 1st Lesson from *Zechariah* and the 2nd Lesson also from *1 Peter* at Mattins show us the universality of God's love and the divine will to be reconciled with the whole of sinful creation. This is part and parcel of the radical redemption of our humanity. It doesn't eclipse the folly of human sin.

The Gospel reading from *Matthew* shows us two things. First, an act of *corporal mercy* towards the body of Christ by Joseph of Arimathea who *takes* his body, "wraps it in a clean linen cloth," and lays it in his own new tomb. Athanasius remarked that Christ borrowed a body that he might save our humanity, here he borrows a tomb from Joseph of Arimathea. Secondly, we have already the beginning of the various conspiracy theories that seek to cover up the follies of human sin and evil. The chief priests and Pharisees go to Pilate asking for a watch of Roman soldiers to guard his tomb "lest his disciples come by night and steal him away." It is all part of an attempt to cover up and deny what cannot be denied about our actions, an instance of the ongoing nature of our hearts and minds in wilful disarray. It already anticipates the Vigil of *Easter Eve* - our waiting not just in silent contemplation in the peace of *Holy Saturday* but upon the making visible of the reality of the life that is Christ in his *Resurrection*, the life that is the moving force and presence in all of the events of the *Passion*.

We are pierced in our souls, strange as it may seem, through the silence and peace of *Holy Saturday*, which awakens us to the radical meaning of Christ's sacrifice in reconciling the whole of our sinful humanity to God. In a wonderful way, we see yet again, how "the thoughts of many hearts are revealed" even in the "harrowing" or rescuing of souls in Hell, and, yet again, we are pierced and moved by the sheer wonder of divine love in Christ.

"A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the  
thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Fr. David Curry  
Holy Saturday, 2026

Easter Vigil: "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed"

The quiet silence of *Holy Saturday* morning gives place to the *Alleluias* of great rejoicing on the *Eve of Easter*. "This is the night, wherein heaven and earth are joined, and mankind partaketh with the Godhead," as the *Paschal Praeconium* sings. We rejoice in the making known of what is hidden in the *Passion*, simply the life and love of God who renews and restores our broken and sinful humanity. We rejoice in the *felix culpa*, the blessed fault of the original sin of Adam and Eve which belongs to all the sins of our humanity because it does not cancel God's deeper will and purpose for our humanity, namely, our being partakers of his divinity. It does not mean the loss of our humanity but rather its true being as found in the all-embracing love of God who alone makes something not just out of nothing but out of the nothing of our sin and evil.

The signal note is one of joy and praise at God's restoring the dignity of our humanity to its purpose as found in his will. Redemption is just that, our being brought back to the truth of our being. That story of human redemption is recalled in the *Easter Proclamation* and in the Old Testament lessons, psalms and canticles that bring us to the renewal of our baptismal vows, to our identity in Christ through his Death and Resurrection, the very story which has been re-presented to us in the symphony of the *Passion* that culminates in the *Resurrection* of Christ.

Our little country vigil, as I like to style it, highlights some of the essential features of the ancient *Easter Vigil*: the blessing of the Paschal candle marking the transition from the darkness of sin and death to the light and life of Christ, the singing of the *Paschal Praeconium*, the prophecies or lessons from the Hebrew Scriptures that belong to the Easter Mystery, the renewal of our baptismal vows as a kind of annual rebirth of our souls in the mystery of Christ's *Resurrection*, and the *lauds* of *Easter Morning*. Tomorrow we will participate in the sacrament of the Altar which is always a recollection and re-presentation of *Holy Week* and *Easter*.

It is all about the renewal and restoration of our souls in the grace of the mystery of Christian Faith. The Vigil simply concentrates our life in faith. Through the rich imagery of the liturgy of the Vigil we are recalled to who we are in Christ. In being made partakers of his divinity, we are restored to the truth and dignity of our humanity as made *imago dei*, in the image of God, made *imago Christi*, in the image of Christ, made *imago Trinitas*, in the image of the Trinity - all three in one, we might say, each as a way of speaking about the God-given dignity of our humanity.

*Holy Week* and *Easter* witness to this deep truth about ourselves in the face of the evils and suffering of our world. That we are pierced in our hearts about such things belongs to the good of "this holy night." We are pierced in sorrow for sin but pierced in joy and love for the triumph of life and love over all suffering, all sin, and all death. For this is our Easter joy.

Christ is Risen, *Alleluia! Alleluia!* The Lord is Risen indeed, *Alleluia! Alleluia!*

Fr. David Curry, Easter Vigil 2026

Easter: "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

"Christ is risen, *Alleluia! Alleluia!* The Lord is risen, indeed! *Alleluia! Alleluia!*" This is the great *Easter* proclamation. *Easter* resounds with the cries of *Alleluias*, which means "Praise the Lord" or "Praise *Yahweh*," that is, God. It is a Hebrew word transliterated into Greek and subsequently into other languages such as English. What does it mean? Simply put, it is our acknowledgement of the radical truth of God as the source and end of all life, the life which is greater than sin and death, the good that is greater than evil and wickedness. Life *is* resurrection! The *Resurrection* of Christ witnesses to our resurrection, to our being alive to life itself, to our humanity alive in God. God is life!

*Easter* is not a *happy-clappy add-on* to an otherwise dismal and gruesome story. It is not a kind of *feel-good illusion* to hide from view what we would rather not see, a human construct of our own devising in the face of a sense of the fatal futility and meaninglessness of life. Quite the opposite. It makes visible what has been obscured and hidden yet present in all of the events of the *Passion*. The Crucified and Risen Christ reveals us to ourselves.

Simeon's prophecy about Jesus and Mary has carried us through *Holy Week* to *Easter* in all our meditations on the *Passion*. The whole point is that *the Passion is in the Resurrection* and *the Resurrection is in the Passion*. The two are inseparably intertwined. "This child," Simeon said to Mary, "is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be spoken against." We have certainly seen and heard quite enough of the things *spoken against* Christ in mockery and insult, in false witness and lies, in animosity and cruel hatred by Jew and Gentile. Such is sin, the *falling away* from truth and goodness in all its forms. But we have also seen moments and hints of the *rising again* of those whose consciences have been convicted by what they have seen and heard, such as Peter's tears of sorrow, the Penitent's prayer on the Cross to Christ, the unnamed woman breaking open the alabaster jar of ointment of spikenard to anoint Jesus in anticipation of his death and burial, and so on. These moments have shown souls being pierced by sin and by love. We are in the story in the fullest sense.

Why? Because Christ wills to suffer all that our humanity in its sin and folly throws at him. In so doing, he makes *all sin visible to us* as the denial of the truth and goodness of God. But in so doing, he makes *visible to us the divine love* that is greater than all sin and evil. Thus Simeon's prophecy about Jesus extends to his words to Mary: "a sword shall pierce through thy soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Through this text we have contemplated those "two vast spacious things," as the poet George Herbert puts it, namely, "Sinne and Love." We have beheld him whom we have pierced and that is the great good and blessing of *Holy Week* which culminates in his rising, his *Resurrection* from the dead.

We have gone from the cries of *Hosanna*, to the shouts of *Crucify*, from the cries of bitter sorrow to the greater cries of *Alleluia*. What do our cries of *Alleluia* mean? Simply the acknowledgement that the moving principle in the *Passion* and the forms of our witness to it is nothing less than the love of God made known in Christ Jesus. "Love never faileth."

Love lives and never dies. It is life, the life of God. "In him was life and the life was the light of men" (Jn. 1.4), the life and light that is love everlasting.

Pierced or moved inwardly by Christ's *Passion* we are now pierced or moved inwardly and outwardly in our cries of *Alleluia*, cries that embrace the cries of *Hosanna* and *Crucify* and all the cries of the sorrows of our hearts. Our *Alleluias* proclaim the glory of God in the Risen Christ.

All the stories of the *Easter Season* show the idea of *Resurrection* coming to birth in our hearts and minds by way of the *Passion*. The one does not eclipse the other, rather they inform and shape each other. They show the process of rebirth in us to life and joy in God over and against sin and death. They affirm that we are more not less than our bodies and our experiences, more not less than what happens to us, even more and not less than our sins and follies. This is the meaning of life as love, and love as life, without which we remain dead in ourselves, dead to the living word, imprisoned in ourselves, buried in the graves of resentment and anger. But "you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God," Paul proclaims. Christ is your life. This changes how we see ourselves and our world. It is not static but dynamic, a constant process of dying to ourselves and living to Christ.

The *Resurrection* is the most radical affirmation of the dignity of our humanity, of our human individuality, of our embodied being, and of the created order itself. It belongs to a long, long tradition of thinking about what it means to be human, about the relationship between soul and body, or spirit or matter, if you will, and about our life together in the body of Christ. It is the strongest possible affirmation of the goodness of the material world, a reaffirmation of the essential goodness of all creation as God-given. The Risen Christ is not a hologram, a star-trek AI fantasy of our technocratic illusions. It is not a gnostic flight from the world as if matter was evil or as if we were disembodied souls floating about in some sort of digital ether.

Christ's *Resurrection* is the counter to pride and hubris in all its forms. God makes something out of the dust of our humanity. Not by worldly power and dominion but by the grace of divine humility. "God hath restored human nature even more wonderfully than he created it" (Anselm). We are made *partakers of his divinity* by God humbling himself to *share our humanity* through Jesus Christ. The *Resurrection* is the wondrous restoration of the dignity of our humanity in the face of the never-ending parade of the inhumanity of our world of death and destruction, of suffering and hatred. But only through the humility of God. "Humility is so powerful that even the all-conquering God did not conquer without it" (Ephrem the Syrian, c. 306-373).

The theology of glory is impossible apart from the theology of the cross. No *Passion*, no *Resurrection*. No Cross, no glory. The restoration is the transformation of sin into love, of death into life, through the *Passion* and the *Resurrection*. The marks of the crucifixion are not extinguished. They become the marks of love, the love that is life. That is the deep joy of our Easter *Alleluias*.

"A sword shall pierce through thy soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."  
Fr. David Curry, Easter 2026