

## **St. John's and St. Columba's Strathpray**

*Let us pray for one another and for the world ...*

### **Sunday April 6<sup>th</sup> Fifth Sunday of Lent.**

*'As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem they came to a village where a woman named Martha welcomed them into her home. Her sister Mary sat on the floor, listening to Jesus as he talked. But Martha was the jittery type and was worrying over the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Sir, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me." But the Lord said to her, "Martha, dear friend, you are so upset over all these details! There is really only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it - and I won't take it away from her!" Luke 10:38-42.*



*'When I let my imagination rove over this story I see an exhausted Jesus, looking for a time of rest. Everyone wants a piece of him, and right now what he longs for is some peace and quiet. He has a bolthole with his dear friends in Bethany. They welcome him warmly as always, and Martha bustles round in the kitchen, preparing a meal for them. Mary meanwhile sits at Jesus' feet, and they share the quiet conversation of trusted friends. Maybe this story is an invitation to reflect on our priorities. The meal is important, but there are some things that are even more important. We might almost hear Jesus murmuring quietly to Martha, as he draws her lovingly into his presence and invites her to sit beside her sister, "Martha, first things first."*

*There is a Martha and a Mary in each of us. Our inner Martha does need to attend to the practical life, but our inner Mary also needs to sit quietly in the presence of God. Sometimes it is a matter of priorities.' (Margaret Silf)*

Lord Jesus, there is a time for work and a time for prayer. May we learn to honour each in its right time. Amen.

We pray for the congregation of St. Margaret of Scotland, Aberlour.

### **Monday April 7<sup>th</sup>**

*'In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us.' Ephesians 1:7.*

*'The language of redemption is not particularly popular nowadays. We are more comfortable with other aspects of the saving work of Jesus: we come more easily to the manger than to the cross; we are more enthusiastic about the work of creation than that of salvation. Traditional Christianity asks for balance. It says that each of the saving mysteries needs to be kept in tension with the others.' (Lavinia Byrne – A Time To Receive)*



Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine: O what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God; born of his Spirit, washed in his blood. This is my story, this is my song, praising my Saviour all the day long.

On World Health Day, we pray for those around the world who lack adequate health care.

## **Tuesday April 8<sup>th</sup>**

*'For John, Christ truly is "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). We can say with some confidence that the last supper was a kind of Passover meal, and therefore the death of Christ at this time adds action to the words he says when breaking the bread. A Passover crucifixion underlines the connections between Jesus and the sacrificial lamb of Exodus 12 and thus invites the inevitable conclusion that Jesus' death on the cross must be seen in the context of the bigger picture of God's redemption of Israel. His death is the culmination of that story, and, after the resurrection, becomes the first part of a story in which God redeems not only Israel but all who come to believe that Jesus is the sacrificial Lamb of God who pays the deadly price of sin and defeats death by rising on the third day.'* (Gordon Giles – *Fasting And Feasting*)

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world. Have mercy on us and grant us peace. Amen.



We pray for those struggling with debt.



### **Focus on the world during Lent.**

*When the world could wait no longer, the carpenters took up their tools; God's son was made a cross, fashioned from wood and skill of human hands, fashioned from hate and will of human minds.*

*He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief:*

**FOR US HE GRIEVED.**

*He was summoned to the judgement hall; the enemy of the state, a danger to religion:*

**FOR US HE WAS JUDGED.**

*He was lashed with tongues and scourged with thongs:*

**BY HIS WOUNDS WE ARE HEALED.**

*He was nailed to the cross by human hands:*

**BONE OF OUR BONE, FLESH OF OUR FLESH.**

*He died, declaring God's forgiveness; he rose again on the third day, making it real; he ascended into heaven, that he might be everywhere on earth; he sent the Holy Spirit, as the seal of his intention. Thus, though we were once no people:*

**NOW WE ARE GOD'S PEOPLE.**

*For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world:*

**BUT THAT THE WORLD, THROUGH HIM, MIGHT BE SAVED.** (Wild Goose Worship)



## **Wednesday April 9<sup>th</sup>**

*"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." Matthew 5:43-45.*

*'Jesus' teaching that we should love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us was shocking for the people of his day, as it remains shocking to us today. In so many ways we quite like a vengeful God. It can justify the rage and vindictiveness of our own actions. It allows us to excuse violence and turn our back on oppression, to excuse our spending vast sums each year on ever more sophisticated weapons. It means we can keep at arm's length the radical love Jesus shows us in his passion.'* (Stephen Cottrell)

By the nails through your hands and feet, give comfort to the suffering.

By the crown of thorns upon your head, give hope to the despairing.

By the spear that pierced your side, give courage to the heart-broken.

By your being scorned and rejected of men, give love to the lonely.

By your time of desolation, lift up all who are down.

By your death on the cross, give us life which is eternal. Amen.

We pray for those recently released from prison who have no home, job or support.

### **Thursday April 10<sup>th</sup>**

*'In John's Gospel, on the night before he dies, Jesus says to his friends, "You did not choose me, but I choose you" (John 15:16). You are my beloved – precious and beautiful in my sight. And I love you not because of your wit or wealth or wisdom; I love you just because you are. In a world that wants to evaluate people by what they have achieved or what they earn or what they wear, this is powerful good news. You are loved and*



*precious in the eyes of God just because you are.'* (Stephen Cottrell – *I Thirst*)

God of the heights and the depths, we bring to you those driven into the desert, those struggling with difficult decisions. May they choose life.

God of the light and darkness, we bring to you those lost in the mist of drugs or drink, those dazzled by the use of power. May they choose life.

God of the wild beast and the ministering angel, we bring to you those savaged by others' greed, those exhausted by caring for others. May they feel your healing touch. Amen.

We pray for the work of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

### **Friday April 11<sup>th</sup>**

*'With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" Mark 15:37-39.*

*'In the temple the presence of God was hidden, concealed behind a curtain, inaccessible to humanity, but the psalmist reminds us that, while humans could not see through the curtain, it did not stop God seeing into our souls. This curtain being torn in two at the time of Christ's death is therefore deeply significant, because it heralds a completely different understanding of the relationship between God and humanity, a real separation between the old and the new covenants; the division of the temple curtain marks the transition from Old to New Testament. In Jesus Christ, God is not hidden, but revealed in human form for all to see.'* (Gordon Giles – *At Home In Lent*)

Jesus, part the curtains of our souls and look with mercy upon our wrongdoings and infirmities. For by your cross and resurrection, you have removed the barrier of sin, revealed yourself and set us free. Amen.

We pray for our political leaders.



## Saturday April 12<sup>th</sup>

*'The great mystery of the incarnation is that God became human in Jesus so that all human flesh could be clothed with divine life. Our lives are fragile and destined to death. But since God, through Jesus, shared in our fragile and mortal lives, death no longer has the final word. Life has become victorious. Paul writes, "For our earthly bodies, the ones we have now that can die, must be transformed into heavenly bodies that cannot perish but will live forever. When this happens, then at last this Scripture will come true - "Death is swallowed up in victory." O death, where then your victory? Where then your sting?"*

*(1 Corinthians 15:53-55) Jesus has taken away the fatality of our existence and given our lives eternal value.'* (Henri Nouwen – *Bread For The Journey*)

Christ in my beginning. Christ there at my end. Christ be in my journey. Christ everlasting friend. Christ be in my waking. Christ at my repose. Christ in every action. Christ when eyelids close. Amen.

On the International Day for Street Children, we pray for young people worldwide living outdoors and surviving by stealing or begging.



### George Herbert – On Prayer.

Prayer the church's banquet, angel's age,  
God's breath in man returning to his birth,  
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,  
Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth  
Engine against th' Almighty, sinner's tow'r,  
Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,  
The six-days world transposing in an hour,  
A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;  
Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,  
Exalted manna, gladness of the best,  
Heaven in ordinary, man well drest  
The milky way, the bird of Paradise,  
Church-bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,  
land of spices; something understood.

