

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

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

'This Lent – let your door stand open to receive Christ; unlock your soul to Him; offer Him a welcome in your mind; and then you will see the riches of simplicity, the treasures of peace, and the joy of grace.' (St. Ambrose)

Sunday March 17th **Passion Sunday**

'Jesus said, "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour"? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!' Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.' John 12:27-33.

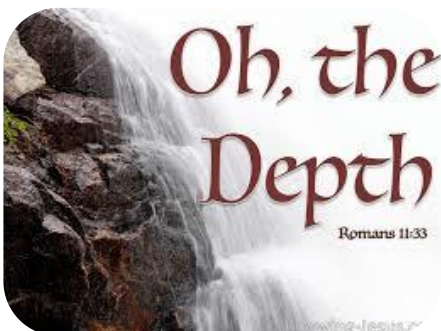


'The cross is not some ideal that is way up in the clouds. The cross was put in the ground, wasn't it? It was dug into the soil, and when you see the Saviour hanging on the cross, you see the love at grass roots. It goes right to where human beings are in their conceit and selfish ambitions. Jesus was crucified in history. He arose from the dead in history, ascended into heaven and came back in the form of the Holy Spirit in history. His power is among us now at this time in history. How will we come to know the power of the cross? Get ready for an invasion by God. The Holy Spirit is the Captain of the invasion forces. We can say to Him, "Come, Holy Spirit, invade my heart with the love of Christ until I know that the love of Calvary's cross has taken me captive."' (Bp. Festo Kivengere – Hope For Uganda)

Gracious and merciful Father, you have made it clear that we cannot save ourselves. No one is perfect or even righteous; no one earns salvation. All of us fall short of your glory, and while it is true that some may live better lives, even the best cannot attain the perfection required in order to have fellowship with you. Thank you that, in your grace, you sent Jesus to save me from the judgement to come. I believe in Jesus. I put my whole trust in him. And I ask that by your Spirit you would place me securely and safely in him. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

We pray for the congregation of the Mid Ross Charge - St. Anne, Strathpeffer; Dingwall Town Chaplaincy: Julia Boothby, Gordon Sleight, Barbara Chandler, Norma Higgott.

Monday March 18th



'Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them? For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.' Romans 11:33-36.

'The life of faith helps us to draw close to God, to rest in God, to enjoy His richness and wisdom and knowledge. Our own spiritual life is not meant to be a puzzle, a detached

exploration of the mind of God, or a wrestling with concepts and bright ideas. It is something more passionate than that, calling out an answer from deep within us.’ (Lavinia Byrne – A Time To Receive)

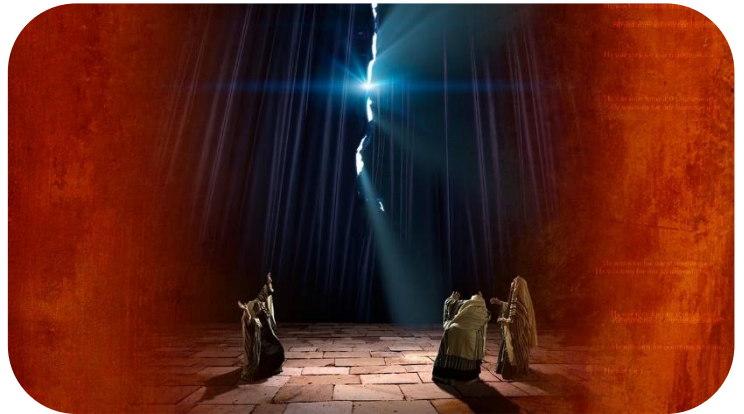
O God of mercy and might, helper of all who seek you in prayer, come to me today. Call me to prayer. Help me gain the confidence I need. Keep me faithful. Give me grace. Grace upon grace. Amen.

We pray for all in the hospitality business as they prepare for the Easter holidays.

Tuesday March 19th

‘Then Jesus shouted out again, dismissed his spirit, and died. And look! The curtain secluding the Holiest Place in the Temple was split apart from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and rocks broke.’ Matthew 27:50-51.

‘And so, dear brothers, now we may walk right into the very Holy of Holies, where God is, because of the blood of Jesus. This is the fresh, new, life-giving way that Christ has opened up for us by tearing the curtain - his human body - to let us into the holy presence of God. And since this great High Priest of ours rules over God’s household, let us go right in to God himself, with true hearts fully



trusting him to receive us because we have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean and because our bodies have been washed with pure water.’ Hebrews 10:19-22.

‘From the beginning of time, people have lived with the knowledge that they are separated from their Creator. Jews in Jesus’ day knew that full well, and in case they forgot, there was the curtain – the great, heavy curtain of blue, purple and scarlet thread and finely twisted linen. 4 inches thick and so strong the historian Josephus said that horses tied to either side of it pulling could not tear it in two. It separated 2 rooms in the tabernacle and existed to bar entrance to God’s holy place. It sent a message about the separation between God and people. It represented a closed door, open only to the high priest, and to him only once each year. And the only way he could survive entrance to that holy place was by the sprinkling of blood. The curtain constantly reminded people of their sin and their separation from God. And then, one day, Good Friday, the curtain was torn in two, from top to bottom, from God to human. Jesus was the true and perfect sacrifice, paying the penalty for all sin – once for all. The curtain no longer served a purpose. The holy place was now opened to us.’ (Kenneth Boa – Forty Days To Easter)

Almighty God, I rejoice in the knowledge that you actually want to be with me, a sinner, and to have me with you. I realize that your grace is far beyond my ability to understand. Jesus has removed all the barriers between us. Teach me how to come before you with the proper mix of humility and confidence. I confess my need for you and trust in what you have done for me. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

We pray for those whose work is tedious, difficult or poorly rewarded.

Wednesday March 20th

If you will humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, in his good time he will lift you up. Let him have all your worries and cares, for he is always thinking about you and

watching everything that concerns you. Be careful - watch out for attacks from Satan, your great enemy. He prowls around like a hungry, roaring lion, looking for some victim to tear apart. Stand firm when he attacks. Trust the Lord; and remember that other



Christians all around the world are going through these sufferings too. After you have suffered a little while, our God, who is full of kindness through Christ, will give you his eternal glory. He personally will come and pick you up, and set you firmly in place, and make you stronger than ever. To him be all power over all things, forever and ever. Amen.' 1 Peter 5:6-11.

'In our everyday lives we wrestle with anxiety and insecurity. That is why Peter uses the image of a lion to describe the forces that roar around unsettling us. We live with stress. Peter speaks for the whole Christian tradition when he says, Don't try to bear it alone. Let God help you bear your burden. So how are we to cast our care on the Lord? There is a call to honesty here. If you name your anxiety, it loses some of its power over you; if you turn it into a prayer, then God can meet you where you really are – as opposed to where you feel you ought to be.' (Lavinia Byrne – *A Time To Receive*)

O God our Father, hear me, who am trembling in this darkness, and stretch forth thy hand unto me; hold forth thy light before me; recall me from my wanderings; and, thou being my guide, may I be restored to myself and to thee. Amen. (Augustine 354-430AD)

We pray for diplomats as they try to negotiate peace and reconciliation where hostility exists.

Thursday March 21st

'What do I deserve from God Almighty above? Isn't calamity reserved for the wicked?

Isn't disaster supposed to strike those who do wrong?

Isn't God looking, observing how I live? Doesn't he mark every step I take? Have I walked hand in hand with falsehood, or hung out in the company of deceit?

***Weigh me on a set of honest scales so God has proof of my integrity. If I've strayed off the straight and narrow, wanted things I had no right to, messed around with sin, Go ahead, then - give my portion to someone who deserves it.'* Job 31:3-8.**



'When we stand on the bathroom scales, we are faced with unrelenting reality. We may wish to deny or ignore it, or we may be inspired to heed a call to renewal and change our behaviour. Similarly, when we submit ourselves to the loving justice of God, by standing on the scales of divine justice, we might heed God's merciful call to righteousness of life and spiritual renewal. When we stand on the bathroom scales, we are doing so for physical reasons, but we can also remember the metaphorical scales that measure our spiritual weight. Ultimately, how we respond is our choice, but we can always call on the Lord for divine help.' (Gordon Giles – *At Home In Lent*)

Heavenly Father, as our sin weighs heavily upon us, give us grace to heed the warnings of your word and your call to repent, turning around to mend our ways and return to you.

We pray for the people and leaders of Ukraine and Russia.

Friday March 22nd

'My rock, my fortress, my stronghold, my deliverer and my shield.' Psalm 144:2.

'These particular names for God are all strong words. God the rock is found within nature, within created reality. That is one place where we may look for God with complete confidence. A rock is an image of changeless solidity and security. You can cling to the rock; you can hide yourself in its crevices.' (Lavinia Byrne)

Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee; let the water and the blood, from Thy riven side which flowed, be of sin the double cure: cleanse me from its guilt and power. We pray for residents and staff in Young Offender Institutions.

Saturday March 23rd

***'Take care! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired, for then you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. When you give a gift to a beggar, don't shout about it as the hypocrites do - blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you in all earnestness, they have received all the reward they will ever get. But when you do a kindness to someone, do it secretly - don't tell your left hand what your right hand is doing. And your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you.'* Matthew 6:1-4.**



'The opportunities to give are with us always. What is important is not simply the good deed itself – but the relationship with God that is behind the good deed. Is our giving inspired by a sense of the generosity of God? Is that what we have to share with other

people? May God be at the beginning and the end of all our giving. To give from a full heart is to bestow love in abundance, and to receive even more in return.' (Lavinia Byrne)

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour, and the majesty; for everything in heaven and on earth is yours. All things come from you, and of your own do we give you. Amen.

We pray for social workers in our region.



God of eternity, You saw the beginning and You see the end. Your plan has always been good, though I often fail to recognise it as such. As I look to You with love and awe, I am learning to view my circumstances and challenges in this life with courage, knowing that You have my destiny in your hands. My confidence is in Your promises. I know that my future is secure in You. I ask for a greater understanding of Your purpose for me on this earth and Your guidance as I share the Good News with people I encounter during this earthly pilgrimage as I await my eternal home with You. I pray this in the name of the One who loves me and gave himself for me. Amen.