LENT

**Ash Wednesday**

Blessed be you, O Lord, and blessed be your Name forever and ever. Yours alone, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the victory, and the majesty. Yours alone, O Lord, are heaven and earth, and you are God over all. Holy are you and righteous in all your works. You love righteousness and hate iniquity, and commanded a just recompense for all transgression. You have declared: the wages of sin is death; and if you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, who of us is innocent? There is none that does good; and our righteousness is an unclean thing. But there is forgiveness with you.

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge our transgression; and our sins are ever before us. The good that we should do, we do not; and the evil which we should not, we have done. We have transgressed your holy Word. In thought, word, and deed, that which was good we have corrupted; and in that which was wicked we have found pleasure. We have disdained the pure and loved the evil. The holiest joys and happiness that you have granted to us, O God, we have marred by our disobedience. We have sinned against heaven and in your sight and are unworthy to be your children.

We come before you, humbly trusting in your promise that if we confess our sins, you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We plead the merits of your only-begotten Son who called sinners to repentance. For the sake of his innocent suffering and death, pardon us. Wash us in his precious blood from our iniquity, and free us from our sin. Turn us from our transgression. Save us from our folly. Deliver us from our willfulness. By your Spirit lead us from the arid, fruitless deserts of our lives to the grace of our Lord Jesus, as to a stream of living water. Refresh our souls in him, and restore to us the comfort of his cross, where you reconciled us to your presence.

Shower blessings upon your church. Endow it with every grace and let it flourish in every land in true faith and good works.

Look with favor upon our nation and crown it with virtue and godliness. Cleanse it of iniquity and turn it to righteousness. Strengthen and uphold all in authority and bind us together in justice and freedom.

Give us strong, pleasant homes, where in all our common tasks each one serves thee and all is done to your glory.

\*Let now your benediction fall upon us as we come to your holy table. And as, by partaking of this bread and the fruit of the vine, we remember Christ our Lord, grant us a faithful recollection of all that he has done for us, and give us thankful hearts to praise, serve, and obey him.

For all who seek your mercy and help, the sick and the aged, the lonely and the weary, the disheartened and the discouraged, we pray. Supply all their need according to your riches in Christ Jesus and grant them a joyful reprieve from their trials.

Grant to all here assembled who have brought before you the sacrifices of broken spirits and contrite hearts, the fullness of your mercy in the saving knowledge of our dear Redeemer, Jesus Christ, in whose Name we pray all these things. Amen.

\*If the Lord's Supper is observed.

Adapted from Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

LENT

**First Sunday**

O almighty God, heavenly Father, who appointed us who confess the Name of your Son to preach his death until he comes again, we come before your throne of grace, humbly trusting in your mercy.

We thank you that gave us a high priest, Jesus Christ, who knows our infirmities, having borne them; who understands our temptations, having endured them; and who learned obedience by the things which he suffered.

O Lamb of God, who as sacrifice was slain for the sins of the world, becoming the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey you, teach us obedience. Give us such faith that we may fully obey all your gracious and life-giving commands. Fill us with a true love for you so that all so that we do not fear submitting ourselves fully to your Word. Grant us such trust that we, listening to your voice, may find the true joy of conforming our wills to your holy will.

O Holy Spirit, if we are led into the wilderness of temptation, deliver us by your power and save us from all evil. In times of testing, ensure that we do not fall from your grace. Help us to wrestle daily against the powers of darkness which manifest themselves in every circumstance or position in life. Overthrow the tempter, Satan, in every assault on our souls. Make us strong in you and, by the example of the Lord Jesus, show us the victorious power of your holy Word.

And as we of your church, O God, are tenderly permitted to work together with you in the salvation of all humanity, grant that we may receive your grace for our own regeneration before we seek it for others. If there be any here in our midst who have not heeded you call, grant your power, that they may heartily repent, believe the Gospel, and receive your mercy.

Let your blessings envelop our homes. Give all parents wisdom to see the influence of character, and grace to be true followers of him who is the Light of the world, so that by their manner of life and conversation they may be worthy lights in the lives of their children.

Bestow your Spirit upon our country, O Lord, that in every office and calling, by every human virtue and divine grace, we may show forth your praises, your power, and your glory.

Because you sent Jesus as the captain of our salvation and he was perfect through suffering, if any among us are afflicted with suffering and pain, grant that they may learn of your love and receive your fatherly chastening. If any be sorrowful, give them the comfort of your promises. If any be in need, show yourself, the Source of all good. If any be dying, give them the confidence that though the earthly house of this tabernacle will dissolve, we have a building of God, eternal in the heavens.

Now, O Father, give your angels charge over all your people, to minister to their salvation, and to bring them safely through this world to that eternal kingdom which you have prepared for all who love you. In the Name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Adapted from Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

LENT

**Second Sunday**

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who created all things, both visible and invisible, by your mighty Word grant us a true faith. Help us to know that without faith it is impossible to please you, and that any who come to you must believe that you are the living God, and that you reward those who diligently seek you. Bring us to the understanding that you have the whole world in your hand, and that none of us lives for ourselves alone, and that we are not solitary in our living or dying, for we are yours, and all is yours. Grant also that we may see that our purpose is to believe in you and in him whom you sent, our Lord Jesus.

You have spoken to us through him; may we hear and obey him. You gave us a perfect example in him; may we walk in his steps. You asked us receive him in faith; may we open our hearts to his gracious presence. You told us that no one comes to you except through him; may we see him as the Way to your divine mercy. And you called us to worship him; may we give him our love, our praise, and our adoration. We thank you Father, that you did not bestow upon us your wrath, but rather salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us. May we ever live together with him.

Now, O God, in the Name of him who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, help us to walk in obedience to your commandments, to prove all things and hold fast to that which is good, to abstain from every appearance of evil. O God of all grace, through your Son, our Savior, sanctify us wholly, that in spirit and soul and body we may be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And as you desire all humanity to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, stir up your church to send members to preach the Gospel at home and abroad. Endow your people with the heart and vision to pray, give, and labor for the salvation of all humankind. We pray for all people: for all in authority, that they may respect your holy will; for all who do not know Jesus as Savior, that they may hear and believe the Gospel; for all who are in danger, that they may be preserved from harm. May all, in every land, dwell together in love and peace.

Grant that our homes may be tabernacles of your Spirit. Make all who reside in our homes increase and abound in love one toward another. To all parents give the graces of spiritual wisdom and good conscience; to all children give the spirit of obedience.

Have mercy upon all who are here in your house today, O Lord. Forgive us our transgressions. Support the weak. Correct the disobedient. Against all evil and adversity that vex our souls or bodies, grant us your aid.

These things we ask in the Name of your Son Jesus who gave his life a ransom for us all that he might bring us to you. Amen.

Adapted from Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

LENT

**Third Sunday**

Lord God most holy, who dwells in the heavens, without whom there is no help, and with whom there is no danger, be the Guardian and Defender of all who lift up their souls to you, and who in their desolation or affliction seek your mercy.

We thank you for the love of Jesus and that in his compassion and grace he freely gave himself as the atonement for our sins, yielding up his perfect life as an offering for our redemption and salvation. We thank you for the finished work of our Lord: his holy life, his blessed example, his gracious teaching, his loving companionship, and his atoning death. With grateful hearts we thank you for the willing spirit in which he gave himself as your suffering Servant, fulfilling all the demands of your holy law and righteous government, and satisfying the handwriting of ordinances against us.

Grant us your Holy Spirit that we may inherit your eternal kingdom. Help us to imitate the example of Christ and to walk in love. Grant that as children of the heavenly light we may earnestly repent of our sins, forsake the ways of darkness and error, and follow in the paths of goodness, righteousness, and truth. With your finger cast out all demons of uncleanness that assault us. Fill our souls with holiness, love of your Word, and every pure grace and virtue.

Let your hand, O Lord, rest upon your church to prosper and defend it. Give success to all who sow the seed of your Word, proclaim the glorious Gospel of salvation, and in Christ's Name minister to all souls and bodies. Give faithfulness to your people that they may labor earnestly with Christ to gather his harvest into his eternal kingdom.

Stretch forth your mighty arm to rule and direct our government and give wisdom and integrity to all who bear the sword, that our nation may be kept in peace, and that righteousness and justice may prevail everywhere. Put down all oppressors, tyrants, and godless governments throughout the world, and turn the hearts of all enemies of your truth to the acceptance of your Word.

O Lord, you are great and greatly to be praised.

For all who are in any want of body or soul, for all of our loved ones who are in distant places, for all who have strayed from thy truth, for all who are in temptation, for all who are suffering sickness and pain, for all who mourn, we pray. Pour down your blessings upon them according to their need. Hear their prayers. Comfort them with your presence. Unite us all in one spirit in your church on earth and then in your courts in heaven. We pray, O Father, for these things in the Name of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen

Adapted from Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

LENT

**Fourth Sunday**

Blessed are you, O Lord, and blessed is your Name forever and ever. Blessed are you, O Lord, and blessed is your Word forever and ever. Blessed are you, O Lord, and blessed is your Son Jesus forever and ever.

O God, we praise you for all your mercies. We thank you that you have redeemed our life from destruction and crowned us with loving-kindness; and that thou have not rewarded us according to our iniquities. Out of your unspeakable grace and mercy, you gave your only-begotten Son to suffer for our transgressions, so that we might have everlasting life. We bless and praise you that, through Christ, we are delivered from the bondage of the Law into the glorious liberty of salvation, granting us access to your throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace in times of need.

Grant that we who are here gathered for worship, seeking you while you are present, calling upon you when you are near, may repent of our evil, forsake all sinful thoughts and ways, and find that you will abundantly pardon us for Jesus' sake.

And as you, O Lord, are mindful of the necessities of all people, giving both the righteous and the ungodly their daily bread, make us aware of your generosity and enable us to receive your blessings with faithful gratitude. Upon all that which you have given us in due season, we ask your favor and blessing that these your gifts may support our bodies and show forth your love and care. O Lord, keep us in health, that we may serve you in this life and in the world to come, through him who is the Bread from heaven, Jesus Christ.

Send forth your gospel to be preached in all lands, and in every tongue. Maintain your church in union with Jesus Christ in the true faith. Bless our schools, that all teachers may both acknowledge and serve you, and that their students may find in you the treasures of life and truth. Give wisdom and counsel to all who in the government of this land have authority over us, so that we may worship and serve you without hindrance, and live in peace and righteousness.

Deliver us from the works of the wicked and preserve us in all dangers through which we must pass. To all who suffer sickness, pain, disease, affliction, or any adversity of body, mind, or spirit, give them the strength that shall enable them to bear their cross and the spirit of him who taught us to say, "Thy will be done." In his glorious Name and for his kingdom's sake, we pray these things. Amen.

Adapted from Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

LENT

**Passion Sunday**

O Lord God, almighty and ever-living King of all creation, who is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom all the hosts in heaven praise and glorify, hear our prayer.

For the revelation of your matchless love in the gift of your Son, for the unknowable wisdom which ordained his lifting up on the cross, for his high priestly sacrifice of his own body on the tree, for the gift of eternal redemption through his Passion, for the promise of eternal inheritance through his death, for the purging of our sins from dead works by his obedience, and for his sanctifying grace, we thank you, O God.

Grant that, under the new and better testament sealed by his agony and death, he may bestow upon us your richest blessings, the forgiveness of all our sins, deliverance from death and the power of the devil, and the assurance of everlasting life. Grant this mercy to each life here present before you today.

O God, we praise you for the wondrous love, the beauty of the holiness, and the infinite power of Christ our Savior. We thank you that you have spoken through him the words of life. We beseech you to help us at all times to be faithful to his Word, and to be obedient to his commandments, that we may never taste the bitterness of death. Help us faithfully to honor him by faith and life, by word and deed. Grant that we may see in him eternal Godhead, Deity Incarnate, the everlasting "I Am" of heaven, uncreated, unchangeable, self-existent, the same yesterday, today, and forever. Inspire us to love and worship him in spirit and in truth.

Out of your infinite goodness lift up your church, O God, that it may be saved from all weakness and failure and empowered for holy service. Govern the nations of the earth, that all may live everywhere without fear of their neighbor. Give your grace to our homes and schools, that youth may be trained for usefulness in this life and for entrance into the life hereafter. Bless all who labor with mind or hand in providing the necessities by which we must live and give them the understanding that in all human toil we are accountable to you. Help us to use our gifts as your stewards. Forgive us all our transgressions. Be the Comforter of the suffering and afflicted, the Sun of the aged, the Supply of the needy, the Protector of the orphaned, and the Savior of all. In the Name of Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

Adapted from Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

LENT

**Palm Sunday**

O God, heavenly Father, into your presence we come with thanksgiving and joy. You are a great God. In your hand are the deep places of the earth and the high reaches of the hills. The sea is yours and you made it, and your hands formed the dry land. You spoke and it was done. You commanded and it stood fast. You sent forth thy Word, and where it is sent it is done.

In this holy hour we thank and praise you that you sent to us your incarnate and living Word, Jesus Christ, your Son, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross and despised the shame. Grant that as we look to him we may, by his example, be neither weary in well-doing, nor faint in heart, nor murmuring when we are chastened and corrected, nor despairing of you mercy; but that as we partake of his suffering we may also in faithfulness and obedience partake of his resurrection.

Save us, O God, not by the works of righteousness which we have done, but by shedding upon us abundantly the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. Sanctify and redeem us from all transgression and purify us unto yourself.

And as you have set our iniquities before you, and our secret sins in the light of your countenance, by the mercy of him who was offered to bear the sins of many, pardon us by his wounds and heal us with his sacrifice.

We are your people and you are our God. Put then your Law into our minds and write it into our hearts; put the song of salvation into our souls and clothe us with the garments of praise, that with joy we may declare: "Blessed is he that comes in the Name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest."

Let your church gather from far and near into the Zion of faith all who would be saved. Send forth laborers, therefore, to preach your Word in truth and to show forth the Name of Jesus as the only Name given under heaven whereby we must be saved. Prosper their witness in all the world, that all may know you, from the least to the greatest.

Grant to this congregation, and to all who worship here, strength of purpose in your holy service, that they may seek with willing minds and pure hearts the building and strengthening of your kingdom. We pray for all who are in sickness, pain, anxiety, fear of death, or sorrow. Be with them when they pass through the waters of trouble. Let them trust in you, for you will deliver them.

Now unto you, O God, who is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before the presence of your glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

Adapted from Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

HOLY WEEK

**Monday**

O God, who is our Life and Salvation, our Refuge and Fortress, the only source of all true strength and hope, from whom all good works and just counsels proceed: We thank you that you gave us Jesus Christ, your only-begotten Son, who came down from heaven, took upon himself our flesh and humbled himself, so that, in suffering the afflictions of the body, the adversities of the soul, and the contradiction of sinners, he might purchase us with his blood and bring us to glory.

We thank you that in Christ you have forgiven the iniquities of your people and covered their sins. Grant that, following his example, we may live with righteousness and patiently endure every adversity. Teach us to set our affection on things above, disdaining all love of the world, and to hold fast to the blessed promise of eternal life through Christ our Lord. Let your Holy Spirit direct our thoughts, that we, obedient to his counsel, may be children of the light.

We beseech you to bless all who trust in the merciful merits of Jesus Christ for salvation. We pray your blessing upon all the schools of the church and upon all the charitable works of your people, that in all things Christ may be honored.

Imbue us with zeal to perform your will and to proclaim the glorious Gospel of our Savior to all the world. Grant that as Christ is lifted up, multitudes may be drawn to his faith and find healing in his cross.

For all in any want of body or soul we pray. Visit them with your salvation, bestow upon them the strength and consolation of your grace, and uphold them in every trial with your free Spirit.

Grant us now, O God, forgiveness of our sins, a stronger faith, and a cleaner and purer life. Give us that peace which passes all understanding, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Adapted from Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

HOLY WEEK

**Tuesday**

Almighty God, heavenly Father, who loves us beyond our understanding and cares for us beyond our deserving, and who has sent thy love to us in your only-begotten Son as a ransom for sin, graciously hear our prayer.

We thank you, dear Father, for the bitter suffering and death of Christ Jesus, our Savior, which he bore without complaint, opening not his mouth to murmur, but enduring silently the pain and anguish. We confess that it was for us that he suffered and was led as a lamb to the slaughter. We acknowledge that he was bruised for our iniquities and wounded for our transgressions. We lament our sins and repent of our love of the world, lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life.

Turn our eyes to the cross from which comes the light to lead us out of all our trials. Give us grace to overcome the dominion of the devil and power to fight the good fight of faith. Grant us your Holy Spirit, that our hearts and lives may be sanctified to you. May we wholly trust for our salvation in the merits of Christ and, clinging to his cross, find your loving purpose reaching into the depths of our souls and redeeming and cleansing us for the joys of heaven. Abide with your church in all the world, O Lord, that like the eternal hills it may be unshaken. Strengthen the walls of this holy house of prayer that thy people may find here in your presence courage, inspiration, and solace.

Bless our native land and guard with watchful eye its honor and security, that its people may love and trust in you.

Bring light through your Word to our homes, so that we, your children, with thankful devotion, may ever know you more truly and serve you more purely.

Hear and sanctify all the prayers which each of us offers to you in their own heart, that in all things your kingdom may come, your will be done, and your holy Name be glorified. Bless and keep us ever yours. We ask, O God, these petitions humbly, penitently, believingly, in the Name of Christ our Lord, whom to see is to see you, whom to hear is to hear you, whom to love is to love you. Amen.

 Adapted from Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

HOLY WEEK

**Wednesday**

O God, who is our Light and Salvation, our Refuge and Fortress, and the Strength of our life; and who delivered up your Servant Jesus to be reckoned among transgressors and to be betrayed by cruel and wicked hands, to suffer and be crucified, in order that whosoever believes in him may have the remission of sins, hear us as we pray. We thank you that you have forgiven the iniquity of your people and covered our sin through the atonement made by Christ our Lord at Calvary.

We thank you for his patience and his suffering, his life and love, his ministry and mercy. We praise you that he, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, was delivered for our offenses; that through his innocent suffering and death he tasted death for every person that all humanity may be reconciled to you. We give thanks that he, who was despised and rejected, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, is the all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins, the great manifestation of your love, and the Deliverer through whom you accomplished our eternal salvation.

Help us now, O God, to serve you by word and life more faithfully each day, to resist and overcome all temptation to do evil, and to receive from you a new heart and a new spirit. Make us mindful of all that your son has done for us and to love him more. Forgive us our sins and lead us safely through the problems that we face each day. Give us stronger faith, and strengthen us to bear cheerfully our crosses, and to meet victoriously all our trials.

Grant us your presence and nearness that in all perils of body or soul we may have the assurance of your constant and loving care. Defend and protect us from all harm and danger, and grant that in every adversity the power of Christ may rest upon us.

From the throne and glory of your kingdom, O God, look upon this land and preserve it from every evil. Manifest your ineffable might and majesty to all the peoples of the earth that they may bow before you in worship, and by their obedience to your commandments honor your Word and will. Subdue the unrighteous and turn the hearts of the unbelieving. Show mercy to the hungry, the homeless, and the oppressed everywhere.

Grant your favor to all in this congregation. Enter our homes and let your Spirit prevail in every heart.

Bless the sick, the forsaken, the suffering, the anxious, and the perplexed, and give us all that victory in Christ which overcomes the world.

Now unto him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Adapted from Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

HOLY WEEK

**Thursday**

Heavenly Father, almighty God, who in your unspeakable mercy has provided divine knowledge and understanding for a needy world through Jesus Christ, the Bread from heaven, we thank and praise you for your goodness and loving-kindness.

Forgive us the multitude of our transgressions, and grant that we may receive the works of Christ in faith so that we may have perfect remission of all our sins. Take not your Holy Spirit from us but restore unto us the joy of your salvation. Satisfy our souls with the Bread of Life, and grant that, believing in him, we may never hunger again. Cast us not by reason of our sin and faithlessness from your presence but receive us through Christ into your everlasting kingdom. Overcome all pride and self-will in us that resist obedience to the example of Jesus and give us each a ready mind and a pure heart to follow in the way he has prepared for us. Remove the blindness from our spiritual eyes, that we may behold our true selves in the mirror of your Word; and give us unfeigned repentance as we see ourselves as you see us. You see all things, O Lord, and nothing is hidden from you. Our secret sins you see in the light of your countenance. Therefore, we cast ourselves down before you, trust in your mercy, and beseech your grace, that the blood of Jesus Christ may cleanse and wash us of all our offenses.

Grant your favor to your church, O Father, that, being nourished by the true Manna which came down from heaven, it may have vision and strength to do your will.

Let your benediction rest upon all who feel the bitter pains of illness, the shame of conscience, the ache of sorrow, the sadness of separation, and the sting of death. Give all who crave your gracious help the ministry of your holy angels now in this time and, in the end, entrance into your eternal glory.

Now as we proclaim the Lord's Passion and death in the Communion of his Table, uniting our hearts and spirits in his faith and fellowship, grant us your earnest presence, the confidence of your mercy, and the hope of heaven. Through Jesus Christ, whose body we discern in these elements, and whose gifts we receive by his grace, we pray these things. Amen.

Adapted from Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

HOLY WEEK

**Good Friday**

O God the Father almighty, who in the mystery of your eternal counsel ordained your Son to be our Sacrifice for sin, and upon whom you laid the iniquity of us all, that in the gift of his life and in the Sacrament of his death, the remission of the sins of all who believe on him would be accomplished, grant us your peace.

In this holy hour of meditation, when in humility we contemplate how great a salvation you prepared for us in mercy, we thank you for the revelation of yourself in your Son, and for the manifestation in him of your will and grace. We thank you for the eternal words of spirit and life which he gave us, and for his heavenly doctrine; for the fulfillment in him of the law and the prophets, and for our deliverance from condemnation; for his sacrificial love, and for his perfect obedience; for his mercies of healing, and for his holy example of patience in suffering; for his willingness to endure the cross, and for his submission to death.

Grant that we may see, in the darkness that attended his dying, in the shaking of the earth and rending of the rocks, when nature itself mourned its Lord, how great an evil was done, how great a life was ended, how great a death was inflicted. But in the splitting of the veil of the Temple, and in the opening of the graves of the saints, show us our entrance through the innocent blood of Jesus into the heavenly Holy of Holies.

For all that he has done, for all that he has borne, for all that he has given us, for all that he has promised us, we thank you, Father.

From the ends of the earth, your church, which Christ loved and for which he gave himself, bows in adoration and praise. From the depths of every believing and understanding heart the prayer of gratitude rises as incense to your presence. From the ransomed and redeemed of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, the song of thanksgiving and worship ascends to heaven: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.

Heavenly Father, by all that we remember on this day of our Savior's Passion, grant us such instruction as we may need to secure our salvation. In his suffering show us that we must enter your kingdom through much tribulation. In his wounds give us enlightenment and encouragement for all adversity. In his crucifixion teach us that those who are Christ's have mortified their vanities and lusts. By his death help us to prepare for ours. And in his burial help us to see that he who brought life and immortality to light for all who believe has also sanctified their graves.

Now, as we have received your mercy and seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ, grant us, O God, the multiplying of your grace through him who died, but who rose again and evermore reigns as King of heaven and earth. In his glorious Name. Amen.

Adapted from Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)

HOLY WEEK-EASTER EVE

**Saturday**

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who for the transgression of your people suffered your Son to be stricken and attacked, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to you, grant unto us a ready access in prayer to your throne, so that we, coming to you in all boldness, may have the assurance of you mercy.

In this solemn hour of our worship, as we await the anniversary of the day of our Lord's resurrection, help us to recall his suffering and death. As we commit ourselves body and soul into your hand, grant us the deep serenity of spirit that was his. Grant us the true and living trust that he displayed, that we may find ourselves always in your holy and mighty keeping. Give us his perfect submission to your fatherly will, that we, too, may keep our souls in tranquility and peace now and in the hour of our death.

When our day is done, and the sunset of life is upon us, and the evening shadows of our passing gather about us, help us in our helplessness to commit the keeping of our souls to your eternal care. Grant us a quiet end, and grant that our bodies may rest in the earth in peace.

We contemplate in reverence the burial of your Son Jesus Christ. We thank you that as he sanctified our human body by his birth he also sanctified our grave by his burial. When, in the time of our death, our bodies return to the earth from which they came, bless that place, O God, and grant that we may at the last day rise to eternal life. Look upon the resting places of all our loved ones and let them speak to us of the hope and joy of heaven in unison with all our beloved who departed in the true faith.

And as in these days of our Lord's burial, quickened in the spirit, he preached to the imprisoned souls of all the dead who awaited his atonement, grant that the preaching of his church may continue in all the world, and bring to conversion multitudes who are imprisoned by sin and the power of the devil, that they may have the promise of life that now is and of that which is to come.

Give grace, heavenly Father, to all who are passing through the valleys of sin, sorrow, suffering, or other shadows of death, that they may trust in your mercy and be delivered from their afflictions. O God, we humbly beseech you to forgive our manifold sins and iniquities. By the precious blood of Christ heal us, cleanse us, save us. Have mercy upon us, O Lord. Restore unto us the joy of your salvation.

These and all other things which you know we have need of, we pray in Jesus' holy Name. Amen.

Adapted from Clemens H. Zeidler, *Altar Prayers for the Church Year* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1962)