LENT

**Ash Wednesday**

Blessed be thou, O Lord, and blessed be thy Name forever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the victory, and the majesty. Thine, O Lord, are heaven and earth, and thou art God over all. Holy art thou and righteous in all thy works. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity, and hast commanded a just recompense for all transgression. Thou hast declared the decree: The wages of sin is death; and if thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who of us can stand? There is none that doeth good; and our righteousness is an unclean thing. But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

Wherefore, O heavenly Father, we acknowledge our transgression; and our sins are ever before us. The good that we would, we do not; and the evil which we would not, we have done. We have transgressed thy 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 thou hast granted to us, O God, we have marred by our disobedience. We have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and are unworthy to be thy children.

We come before thee, humbly trusting in thy promise that if we confess our sins, thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We plead the merits of thine only-begotten Son who called sinners to repentance. For the sake of his innocent sufferings 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 wilfulness. By thy 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 unto us the comfort of his cross, wherein thou hast reconciled us unto thyself.

Shower thy blessing upon thy 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 thy glory.

\*Let now thy benediction fall upon us as we come to thy 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 thy 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 thy riches in Christ Jesus, and grant them a joyful issue out of all their trials.

Vouchsafe unto all here assembled who have brought thee the sacrifices of broken spirits and contrite hearts, the fullness of thy 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.

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

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LENT

**First Sunday**

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

We thank thee that thou hast given us a high priest, even 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 wast slain for the sins of the world, becoming the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey thee, teach us obedience. Give us such faith that we may obey to the uttermost all thy gracious and life-giving commands. Fill us with a true love to thee so that all fear of holy submission to thy Word is overcome. Grant us such trust that we, hearkening to thy voice, may find the true joy of conforming our wills to thy holy will.

O Holy Spirit, if we are led into the wilderness of temptation, deliver us by thy power and save us from all evil. Suffer us not in our times of testing to fall from thy 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 thee and, by the example of the Lord Jesus, show us the victorious power of thy holy Word.

And as we of thy church, O God, are tenderly permitted to be workers together with thee in the saving of men, grant that we may receive thy grace for our own regeneration before we seek it for others. If there be any here in our midst who have not heeded thy call, grant, O Lord, thy power, that they may on this day heartily repent, believe the Gospel, and receive thy mercy.

Let thy blessing rest upon 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 unto their children.

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

And forasmuch as thou didst make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings, if any among us be afflicted with suffering and pain, grant that they may learn of thy love and receive thy fatherly chastening. If any be sorrowful, give them the comfort of thy promises. If any be in need, show thyself the Source of all good. If any be dying, give them the confidence that though the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, eternal in the heavens.

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

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﻿LENT

**Second Sunday**

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who dwellest not in temples made with hands, and who hast created all things, both visible and invisible, by thy mighty Word, grant us a true faith. Help us to know that without faith it is impossible to please thee, and that he who would come to thee must believe that thou art the living God, and that thou art the rewarder of them that diligently seek thee. Bring us to the understanding that thou hast the whole world in thy hand, and that none of us lives unto himself, and no man dies unto himself, for we are thine, and all is thine. Grant also that we may see that man's chief end is to believe in thee and in him whom thou didst send, even our Lord Jesus.

Thou hast spoken unto us by him; may we hear and obey him. Thou hast given us an example in him; may we walk in his steps. Thou hast bidden us to receive him in faith; may we open our hearts to his gracious indwelling. Thou hast told us that none comes unto thee but by him; may we see him as the Way to thy mercy seat. And thou hast called us to worship him; may we give him our love, our praise, and our adoration. We thank thee, O Father, that thou hast not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by 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 thy 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, by thy Son, our Savior, sanctify us wholly, that in spirit and soul and body we may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And as thou wilt have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, stir up thy church to send men and women to preach the Gospel at home and abroad. Endow thy people with the heart and vision to pray, give, and labor for the salvation of all men. We make intercession for all men: for all in authority, that they may have respect unto thy holy will; for all who know not 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 brotherhood and peace.

Grant that our homes may be tabernacles of thy Spirit. Make all who reside therein increase and abound in love one toward another. To all mothers give the grace of spiritual wisdom; to all fathers the gift of a good conscience; to all children the spirit of obedience.

Upon all, O Lord, who are here in thy house this day, have mercy. Forgive us our transgressions. Support the weak. Correct the disobedient. Against all evil and adversity that vex our souls or bodies, grant us thy aid.

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

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﻿LENT

**Third Sunday**

Lord God most holy, who dwellest in the heavens, without whom there is no help, and with whom there is no danger, be thou the Guardian and Defender of all who lift up their souls unto thee, and who in their desolation or affliction seek thy mercy.

We thank thee for the love of Jesus and that in his compassion and grace he freely gave himself as the propitiation for our sins, yielding up his perfect life as an offering for our redemption and salvation. We thank thee 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 thee for the willing spirit in which he gave himself as thy suffering Servant, fulfilling all the demands of thy holy law and righteous government, and satisfying the handwriting of ordinances against us.

Grant us thy Holy Spirit that we may have inheritance in thy 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 thy finger cast out all demons of uncleanness that assault us. Fill our souls with holiness, love of thy Word, and every pure grace and virtue.

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

Stretch forth thy 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 everywhere prevail. Put down all oppressors, tyrants, and godless governments throughout the world, and turn the hearts of all enemies of thy truth to the acceptance of thy Word.

O Lord, great art thou 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 thy blessings upon them according to their need. Hear their prayers. Comfort them with thy presence. Unite us all in one spirit in thy church on earth and finally in thy courts in heaven. We pray, O Father, for these things in the Name of thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen

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﻿LENT

**Fourth Sunday**

Blessed art thou, O Lord, and blessed is thy Name forever and ever. Blessed art thou, O Lord, and blessed is thy Word forever and ever. Blessed art thou, O Lord, and blessed is thy Son Jesus forever and ever.

O God, we praise thee for all thy mercies. We thank thee that thou hast redeemed our life from destruction and crowned us with loving- kindness; and that thou hast not dealt with us after our sins, nor re- warded us according to our iniquities. Out of thine unspeakable grace and mercy, thou didst give thine only-begotten Son to be made sin for us, and to suffer for our transgressions, so that we might have everlasting life. We bless and praise thee that through Christ we are delivered from the bondage of the Law into the glorious liberty of thy sons, evermore having access boldly to thy throne of grace, there to obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Grant that we who are here gathered for thy worship, seeking thee while thou mayest be found, calling upon thee while thou art near, may repent of our evil, forsake all sinful thoughts and ways, and find that thou wilt abundantly pardon us for Jesus' sake.

And as thou, O Lord, art mindful of the necessities of all men, giving both the righteous and the ungodly their daily bread, make us sensible of thy providence and enable us to receive thy benefits with thanksgiving. Upon all that which in due season thou givest us, we ask thy favor and blessing that these thy gifts may support our bodies and show forth thy love and care. O Lord, keep us in health, to the end that we may serve thee in this life and in the world to come, through him who is the Bread from heaven, even Jesus Christ.

Cause thy gospel to be preached in all lands, and in every tongue. Maintain thy church in union with Jesus Christ in the true faith. Bless our schools, that all teachers may both acknowledge and serve thee, and that their pupils may find in thee 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 thee 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 thou 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.

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﻿LENT

**Passion Sunday (Fifth Sunday)**

O Lord God, almighty and ever-living King of all creation, who art 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 thy matchless love in the gift of thy Son, for the unsearchable 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 consciences from dead works by his obedience, and for his sanctifying grace, we thank thee, O God.

Grant that, under the new and better testament sealed by his agony and death, he may mediate to us thy richest blessings, the forgiveness of all our sins, deliverance from death and the power of the devil, and the assurance of everlasting life. Vouchsafe this mercy to each life here present before thee this day.

O God, we praise thee for the wondrous love, the beauty of the holiness, and the infinite power of Christ our Savior. We thank thee that thou hast spoken through him the words of life. We beseech thee 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 thine infinite goodness lift up thy 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 man may live everywhere without fear of his neighbor. Give thy 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 thee. Help us to use our gifts as thy stewards. Forgive us all our transgressions. Be thou the Comforter of the suffering and afflicted, the Sun of the aged, the Supply of the needy, the Protector of the fatherless, and the Savior of all men. In the Name of Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

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﻿LENT

**Palm Sunday**

O God, heavenly Father, into thy presence we come with thanksgiving and joy. Thou art a great God. In thy hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is thine also. The sea is thine and thou didst make it; and thy hands formed the dry land. Thou didst speak and it was done. Thou didst command and it stood fast. Thou sendest forth thy Word, and that whereunto it is sent is done.

In this holy hour we thank and praise thee that thou didst send to us thine incarnate and living Word, Jesus Christ, thy Son, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross and despised the shame. Grant that as we look unto 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 thy 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 thyself.

And as thou hast set our iniquities before thee, and our secret sins in the light of thy 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 stripes.

We are thy people and thou our God. Put then thy 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 cometh in the Name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest."

Let thy church gather from far and near into the Zion of faith all who would be saved. Send forth laborers, therefore, to preach thy 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 thee, from the least to the greatest.

Grant to this congregation, and to all who worship here, strength of purpose in thy holy service, that they may seek with willing minds and pure hearts the building and strengthening of thy 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 thee, for thou wilt deliver them.

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

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﻿HOLY WEEK

**[Holy] Monday**

O God, who art 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 thee that thou didst give us Jesus Christ, thine only-begotten Son, who, when he hid his glory, 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 thus purchase us with his blood and bring us to glory.

We thank thee that in him thou hast forgiven the iniquities of thy people and covered their sins. Grant that, following his example, we may ever live unto 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 thy Holy Spirit ever direct our thoughts, that we, obedient to his counsel, may be children of the light.

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

Imbue us with zeal to perform thy 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 thy salvation, bestow upon them the strength and consolation of thy grace, and uphold them in every trial with thy 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 under- standing, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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﻿HOLY WEEK

**[Holy] Tuesday**

Almighty God, heavenly Father, who hast loved us beyond our understanding and cared for us beyond our deserving, and who hast commended thy love to us in that thou didst send thine only-begotten Son to be a ransom for sin, graciously hear our prayer.

We thank thee, dear Father, for the bitter sufferings 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, that he might witness a good profession before many witnesses. 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 whence 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 thy Holy Spirit, that our hearts and lives may be sanctified unto thee. May we wholly trust for our salvation in the merits of Christ and, clinging to his cross, find thy loving purpose reaching into the depths of our souls and redeeming and cleansing us for the joys of heaven. Abide with thy church in all the world, O Lord, that like the eternal hills she may be unshaken. Strengthen the walls of this holy house of prayer that thy people may find here in thy presence courage, inspiration, and solace.

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

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

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

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﻿HOLY WEEK

**[Holy] Wednesday**

O God, who art our Light and Salvation, our Refuge and Fortress, and the Strength of our life; and who didst deliver up thy 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 on him may have the remission of sins, hear us as we pray. We thank thee that thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people and covered their sin through the atonement made by Christ our Lord at Calvary.

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

Help us now, O God, to serve thee by word and life more faithfully each day, to resist and overcome all temptation to do evil, and to receive from thee a new heart and a new spirit. Make us mindful of all that thy 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.

Vouchsafe unto us thy presence and nearness that in all perils of body or soul we may have the assurance of thy instant 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 thy kingdom, O God, look upon this land and preserve it from every evil. Manifest thy ineffable might and majesty to all the peoples of the earth that they may bow before thee in worship, and by their obedience to thy commandments honor thy 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 thy favor to all in this congregation. Enter our homes and let thy 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, unto him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

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﻿HOLY WEEK

**[Maundy] Thursday**

Heavenly Father, almighty God, who in thine unspeakable mercy hast provided divine knowledge and understanding for a needy world through Jesus Christ, the Bread from heaven, we thank and praise thee for thy 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 thy Holy Spirit from us, but restore unto us the joy of thy 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 thy presence, but receive us through Christ into thine everlasting king- dom. Overcome all pride and self-will in us that resist obedience to the example of Jesus, and give unto us 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 thy Word; and give us unfeigned repentance as we see ourselves as thou seest us. Thou seest all things, O Lord, and nothing is hid from thee. Our secret sins thou beholdest in the light of thy countenance. Therefore we cast ourselves down before thee, trust in thy mercy, and beseech thy grace, that the blood of Jesus Christ may cleanse and wash us of all our offenses.

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

Let thy 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 unto all such as crave thy gracious help the ministry of thy holy angels now in this time and, in the end, entrance into thine 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 the earnest of thy presence, the confidence of thy 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.

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﻿HOLY WEEK

**Good Friday**

O God the Father almighty, who in the mystery of thine eternal counsel didst ordain thy Son to be our Sacrifice for sin, and upon whom thou didst lay 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 thy peace.

In this holy hour of meditation, when in humility we contemplate how great a salvation thou didst in mercy prepare for us, we thank thee for the revelation of thyself in thy Son, and for the manifestation in him of thy will and grace. We thank thee 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 by the hands of men, how great a life was ended, how great a death was inflicted. But in the sundering 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 thee, O Father.

From the ends of the earth, thy 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 thy 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 thy kingdom through much tribulation. In his wounds give us enlightenment and encouragement for all adversity. In his crucifixion teach us that they that 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 thy mercy and seen thy glory in the face of Jesus Christ, grant unto us, O God, the multiplying of thy grace through him who died, but who rose again and evermore reigns as King of heaven and earth. In his glorious Name. Amen.

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﻿HOLY WEEK-EASTER EVE

**Saturday [Easter Vigil]**

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who for the transgression of thy people didst suffer thy Son to be stricken and smitten, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us unto thee, grant unto us a ready access in prayer to thy throne, so that we, coming unto thee in all boldness, may have the assurance of thy 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 thy hand, vouchsafe unto us the deep serenity of spirit that was his. Grant unto us the true and living trust that he displayed, that we may ever find ourselves in thy holy and mighty keeping. Give us his perfect submission to thy 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 thine eternal care. Vouchsafe unto us a quiet end, and grant that our bodies may rest in the earth in peace.

We contemplate in reverence the burial of thy Son Jesus Christ. We thank thee that as he sanctified our human body by his birth so also he sanctified our grave by his burial. When, in the time of our death, our bodies shall return to the earth from whence they came, bless that place, O God, and grant that we may at the last day rise therefrom 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 unto 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 thy mercy and thus be delivered from their afflictions. O God, we humbly beseech thee 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 thy salvation.

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

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