

Opening Responses

Almighty God, we pray for your blessing on the church in this place.

Here may the faithful find salvation,
and the careless be awakened.

Here may the doubting find faith,
and the anxious be encouraged.

Here may the tempted find help,
and the sorrowful, comfort.

Here may the weary find rest,
and the strong be renewed.

Here may the aged find consolation
and the young be inspired.

Through Christ Jesus our Lord. ***Amen.***

Swallow them up, O Lord; confound their speech; * **for I have seen violence and strife in the city.**

Day and night the watchmen make their rounds upon her walls, * **but trouble and misery are in the midst of her.**

There is corruption at her heart; * **her streets are never free of oppression and deceit.**

For had it been an adversary who taunted me, then I could have borne it; * **or had it been an enemy who vaunted himself against me, then I could have hidden from him.**

But it was you, a man after my own heart, * **my companion, my own familiar friend.**

We took sweet counsel together, * **and walked with the throng in the house of God.**

Let death come upon them suddenly; let them go down alive to the grave; * **for wickedness is in their dwellings, in their very midst.**

But I will call upon God, * **and the LORD will deliver me.**

In the evening, in the morning, and at noonday, I will complain and lament, * **and he will hear my voice.**

He will bring me safely back from the battle waged against me; * **for there are many who fight me.**

God, who is enthroned of old, will hear me and bring them down; * **they never change; they do not fear God.**

Psalm 55

Hear my prayer, O God; * **do not hide yourself from my petition.**

Listen to me and answer me; * **I have no peace, because of my cares.**

I am shaken by the noise of the enemy * **and by the pressure of the wicked;**

For they have cast an evil spell upon me * **and are set against me in fury.**

My heart quakes within me, * **and the terrors of death have fallen upon me.**

Fear and trembling have come over me, * **and horror overwhelms me.**

And I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!
* **I would fly away and be at rest.**

I would flee to a far-off place * **and make my lodging in the wilderness.**

I would hasten to escape * **from the stormy wind and tempest."**

My companion stretched forth his hand
against his comrade; * **he has broken his covenant.**

His speech is softer than butter, * **but war is in his heart.**

His words are smoother than oil, * **but they are drawn swords.**

Cast your burden upon the LORD, and he will sustain you; * **he will never let the righteous stumble.**

For you will bring the bloodthirsty and deceitful * **down to the pit of destruction, O God.**

They shall not live out half their days, * **but I will put my trust in you.**

"It was on a Thursday".....
The Iona Community

It was on the Thursday
That he became valuable.

He hadn't anything to sell. . .
not since leaving his hammer and saw three
years earlier.
Needless to say,
he could build a set of trestles
or hang a couple of shelves at the drop of a
hat, no bother at all.

But he wan't into making things.
Not now.

He was into. . .
Well. . .talking, I suppose.
And listening
and healing
and forgiving
and encouraging. . .
all the things for which there's no pay
and the job center has no advertisements.

So, his work wasn't worth much.

Nor, indeed, was he.
For not being well dressed
or well heeled or well connected,
he wouldn't have attracted many ticket
holders
had he been put up for raffle.
But he had a novelty value. . .
like the elephant man or the fat lady
or the midget at the circus.
Put him on stage and he might be interesting
to look at.
Sell him to the circus
with the promise of some tricks
and there could be some money in it.

It was on the Thursday,
that he became valuable.

Scripture reading Matthew 26:1-5, 14-25

Homily

Quiet reflection

Glorious God, your thoughts are not our
thoughts.
Neither are your ways our ways.
You look at the ugliest soul and see, still
unstirred, the wings of an angel.
**We scan the finest of our neighbors,
anxious to find the flaw.**

You view time in the context of eternity, and
so find a place for waiting, for yearning,
even for suffering, even for dying.

**We demand instant results; and look for
tomorrow before savoring today.**

You know that only one who suffers can
ultimately save that is why you walk the
way of the cross.

**We fear that vulnerability which defies our
power; and so we cry for crucifixion.**

Your thoughts are not our thoughts,
Neither are your ways our ways.

And yet we know that your way is the ladder
to heaven, while, left to our own devices,
our ways slope downward to hell.

But we are here, not to have our worst
confirmed, but to have our best liberated.

So we pray,

**Forgive in us what has gone wrong,
Repair in us what is wasted,
Reveal in us what is good.**

And nourish us with better food than we could
ever purchase:

Your word, Your love, Your inspiration.

Your daily bread for life's journey in the
company of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy Name,

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those

who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

and the power, and the glory,

for ever and ever. Amen.

Closing Words