

HOLY
WEEK

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

¹ Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples ² and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. ³ If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’” ⁴ And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. ⁵ And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶ And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. ⁷ And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. ⁸ And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. ⁹ And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” ¹¹ And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

—Mark 11:1–11

See How Your King Comes

O soul, see how your King comes.

The grandeur of heaven
Bound in dusty flesh,
Carried forth by timid colt.
O glorious juxtaposition, divinity and humanity enmeshed—

Who else has known such heavenly heights,
Yet willingly embraced such impoverished depths?
Who else has forsaken a throne of power,
Descending to a cross of humility?

What glory revealed in Your trajectory toward obscurity!
Though the crowds elevated You with hollow hosannas,
You remained fixed toward lowering Yourself in humble sacrifice.

Selab

And yet, which path do I crave?
The upward victory march of a palm-covered promenade?
Or the downward crawl to a cross of self-giving love?
Jesus, as I reflect upon Your life,
Help me discern the misguided motivations of my own heart,
By the Holy Spirit's power.

Forgive me for singing Your praise with the crowds,
But abandoning You when the road bends toward Calvary.
Forgive me for craving the praise of man,
Rather than the eternal glory that comes from God.
Forgive me for following my selfish desires,
Rather than Your perfect will.
Forgive me for worshipping Your gifts,
Rather than delighting in You as my greatest treasure.

Forgive me for clinging to my comfort,
Rather than surrendering all of my life to You.

Selab

What tenderness that You do not turn
From my brokenness, but weep over it,
As You did over Jerusalem. What mercy,
That You do not reject me for my sin.
You bled over it and made me white as snow.
And what steadfast love! You did not retract a single step
Toward the cross. "Father, forgive them," still wells forth
From Your heart as scandalously now as it did then.

As I bow in a posture of reverence to receive Your mercy,
I do so before the King, exalted by God,
To the highest place in the universe.

Continue to sanctify my heart, my motives, and my worship
Until You come again, no longer upon a frail colt,
But triumphantly, on a white horse,
Radiating the fullness of Your glory and enthroned
Upon a redeemed chorus of hosannas resounding
From every tribe, nation, and tongue.

O soul, see how your King comes!

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Something draws Him. It gives speed
To His pace as the disciples hasten and
Weave across the ancient stone streets
Where David danced as the ark of
The covenant came home, and the
Temple was made for the ark to rest.

Jesus beholds His Father's house,
The meeting place between God and man,
Where a veil hangs and hides the holiness
Of an unyieldingly pure God who cannot
Let sin enter His presence and live.

Jesus enters the temple
To the groaning of nervous cattle
And the smell of burnt offerings
As a hush falls upon the crowd
Who crane their necks to see Him
Standing there, taking it all in.

He was there when David danced.
He watched while the temple was made.
He grieved when the temple was torn down
And the Babylonians broke Israel's back.
He remembers it took Herod forty-six years
To rebuild this temple on the ruins and
In the shadow of its former glory,
As the prayerless house of God played
Host to idols and became a house of trade.

In view of what this place has become,
He clenches His fists and takes
A heavy breath.

The crowd's silence breaks
With the *crack* of a whip.
He drives the people out
Like sheep without a shepherd from
Dens of wolves and robbers.
They wince and hide their faces as the
Bitter sound of breaking wood and
Clink of coins batter the ground.

Zeal for His father's house consumes Him,
But compassion mingles with grief in His heart.
The disciples look on in fear.

The temple is cleansed—
But He's not finished yet.



LAMENT OVER JERUSALEM

³⁷ “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁸ See, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁹ For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

¹ Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. ² But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.”

—Matthew 23:37–24:2

The Widow and Her Two Coins

Did she hesitate before
Walking to the temple,
Embarrassed that it wasn't more,
Second-guessing what she could offer,
Wondering what prompted
This act of generosity,
To step out,
To see her lack
And give anyway?

Who was this woman?
What had she endured
These many years, or only a few,
Wandering helpless and homeless—
Did she have a place to lay her head?
Perhaps from friend to friend,
Family to family she went,
Dwelling in the homes
Of those who
Would welcome her in.

Then one day she is seen.
Kicking the dirt as she walks,
She takes the familiar path
She used to journey hand-in-hand with him,
Humming the usual psalm—his favorite:
“The Lord is your keeper;
The Lord is your shade on your right hand.”
How long has it been
Since she believed those words?
Dare she believe them again?

Her quiet route gives way
To hustle-bustle and crowded streets.
Does she meander, speak briefly with neighbors?
Maybe she sets her gaze downward,
Her task resolute.

She approaches the box, coins in hand,
Warm from rubbing them between her fingers.
Does she pause, linger before dropping
Them in? Does she consider, for one second,
Reaching back in?

When His eyes meet hers, does she see
Or only feel His smile, His eyes beaming
With love? She recognizes Him, though
She has never seen Him.
His words escape her ears
As He acknowledges her
To His friends, for He sees
what they do not.
What she does not.

She wends her way to the winding dirt path,
Smiling with each step, a familiar tune on her lips.
In that moment, does she peer over her shoulder
At the Man who met her gaze?
Does her heart recognize the peace that settles
In and makes a home? Does she finally know
Her worth far surpasses what she can hold in her hands?

The Alabaster Jar

Oh, what precious perfume!
The alabaster jar she had treasured
And saved for years, for a future unknown.
Inside held a fortune,
Worth far more than anyone could understand.

Mary. Quiet, steady, and true.
Unhindered by Judas' objections,
She chose to break it open.
Willingly, she poured out
Her heart, her all, her everything
On the feet of the One
Who held her future in His hands.

In that moment, time stood still
As the fragrant musk filled the room.
The scent of her obedience,
Her praise, her sacrifice,
Drenched His humble, tired feet
And permeated the depths of our sinful hearts.

I exchanged glances with the others at the table.
*Preparation for His burial? I wondered. How could it be?
But Lord, You are here now!
You walk with us and talk with us.
Surely You, the Son of God,
Would not abandon the ones You love
To surrender to death on a cross.*

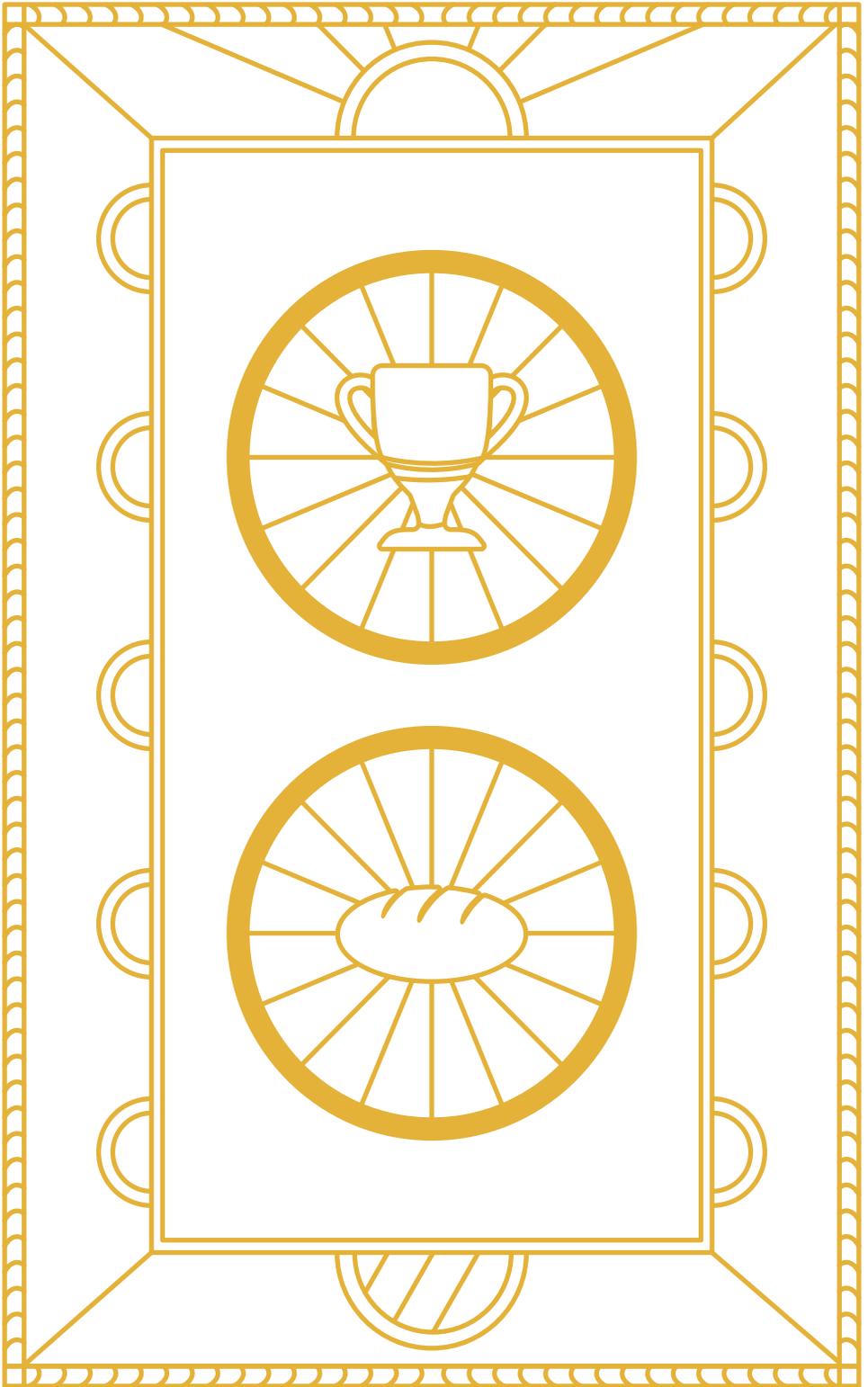
As I drew my next breath,
My lungs filled with fragrance and
I realized what He said was true.
My Savior, teacher, and friend,

The faithful One who foretold His death,
Would indeed soon be absent from our midst.

Question upon question filled my mind,
For I could not comprehend
The why, the how, the when,
Or the significance of the journey
That lay before Him.

One by one, we met His gaze
As the twelve of us parted ways.
The darkness of night pressed on us
As we left His presence, not knowing
What the light of day might bring.

And as we left, the powerful scent lingered—
On our clothes, in our hair, in our hearts.
Her alabaster jar, sacrificially broken,
To be remembered for generations to come
As a most worthy offering to the Most Holy God.



THE LORD'S SUPPER

¹⁴ And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." ¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." ¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. ²¹ But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. ²² For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" ²³ And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

—Luke 22:14–23

The Last Supper

When You called us, we answered, leaving
Our homes and hometowns to follow You
Over mountain, desert, and sea to this
Sacred city, on this sacred night, where
We break bread in a strange room,
Round a stranger's table. Yet,
You say, "One of you will betray Me."

Is it I, Lord?

We watched You stroll upon the sea and
Shush the storm to sleep, shuddered
As demon hordes scattered like sheep
Before You, and savored the same loaves
That satisfied the masses. The rejoicing of
The liberated still echoes in our ears. Yet,
One of us will curse Your name.

Is it I, Lord?

We urged You: stay away, let cool
The embers of envy You stoked. Still,
We entered alongside Your borrowed donkey
In parodied processional as the hosannas
Turned all the wrong heads, fully
Expecting to die with You. Yet,
One of us will deliver You unto death.

Is it I, Lord?

We stood by, wide-eyed, as You toppled
The tables of the double-dealing, driving
The haughty from the house of prayer,

Like a lover defending his bride.
We bit our tongues as You told truth
To the truth-teachers and gatekeepers. Yet,
One of us will speak against You.

Is it I, Lord?

Moments ago, You knelt, the Master
Again serving the servants, to scrub
Our one hundred and twenty toes,
As when that sinner anointed You for death
With precious perfume and precious
Tears. You have washed us. Yet,
One of us remains unclean.

Is it I, Lord?

We stayed, when hundreds walked away,
On the day You said, "I am the Bread of
Life, come down from heaven." We are still
Here, though You hand us Your flesh and say,
"Eat"; You pour us Your blood and say,
"Drink." You chose us. We are Yours. Yet,
No one comes but he who is drawn.

Is it I, Lord?

You say, the Son must suffer, the grain
Must fall. We can no longer pretend
Not to understand. You are leaving
The keys to the kingdom of heaven in
Unworthy hands. Yet, You say, "Believe."
Believe and we will have life eternal.
Every one of us? Yes, every one,

Even I, Lord.

But woe to him; woe to that man
Who betrays the Son of Man. Truly,
Better to have never been.

Is it I, Lord?

Is it I?

WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?

- ¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of
my groaning?
- ² O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,
and by night, but I find no rest.
- ³ Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
- ⁴ In you our fathers trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.
- ⁵ To you they cried and were rescued;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.
- ⁶ But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.
- ⁷ All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;
- ⁸ "He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"
- ⁹ Yet you are he who took me from the womb;
you made me trust you at my mother's breasts.
- ¹⁰ On you was I cast from my birth,
and from my mother's womb you have been my God.
- ¹¹ Be not far from me,
for trouble is near,
and there is none to help.



JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I go over there and pray."
³⁷ And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me."
³⁹ And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."
⁴⁰ And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour?" ⁴¹ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
⁴² Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."
⁴³ And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. ⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."
⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

—Matthew 26:36–47

The Garden I

This garden did not have to be.
It grew from Love's relentless pursuit
Of prodigal children who lost their way—
A harrowing exchange of Eden for Gethsemane.

Entering where mankind dared not tread,
The Son drew near the Father's wrath.
He chose what all deserved but Him,
Fulfilling Love's requirement.

The shadow portending forthcoming pain
Pressed Him to humbly ask
Prayer and presence from His friends.
Silence came instead.

The One to whom all should bow
Bowed Himself to the ground.
His physical form bore the weight
Of His Father's will.

Head bent toward the dust,
Heavenward His voice turned.
He asked His Father, the Way-Maker,
To carve a different path.

No.

The first sip pierced His heart,
A sampling of the horror to come.
The shadow thickened, His body shook,
And two more times He asked,
"Can this cup pass?"

No.

The second sip outstripped the first.
His body raged, refusing calm
As the creation knit by His Word
Received the first offering of His blood
Dripping from the crown of His frame.

The third—sweat soaked His skin.
Sorrow filled Him. His flesh refused,
But faith-steeled, He willingly took the cup
And, rising from the dust,
He squared with the Night.

For the joy set before Him,
He moved toward the cross.
The Light of the world entered the dark,
Seeking what was lost.

The Garden II

Did the olive trees weep
When God the Son
Fell to His knees
To pray the cup away?

Were His words soon hoarse
And sorrow-soaked in that grove
Where Night would do its best
To have its way?

*“Make this cup to pass from Me,”
The words fell from His tongue;
“Yet not My will, My God and King,
But Yours alone be done.”*

Did the stricken Savior spare a thought
For what would come—betrayal and denial
Creeping closer, Judas’ kiss to mark the Lamb,
Peter’s sword to strike a servant?

Did Cephas and the sons of Zebedee perceive that lonely agony
Kept restless comfort with their King
While sound they slept, and Night prowled, patient,
Watchful?

*“Watch and pray,” a simple ask,
And yet, weak flesh would win.
“Could you not watch just one hour?”
Faithful friends had failed, again.*

Did the Servant King, whose bone-deep grief
Etched blood-soaked beauty on His brow,
Feel the masterpiece of eternity—
His life-blood for the sins of sons and daughters?

O ragged anguish made manifest—
Did Night discern it could not crush
The courage of the Word-made-Flesh—
God's wrath to soon be satisfied?

“Abba, Father! Must I make this offering for guilt?

But all to You, praise be.

If You will, I will

Do everything You ask of Me.”

Did the olive trees weep
When God the Son
Rose from His knees
To face the Night head-on?

And did they weep once more
On Sunday morn, when from the tomb
Our Man of Sorrows rose as Christ
The King, defeating Night forever?

“The Son of Man

Is now betrayed

Into sinners' hands.

The hour has come.”

Judas' Betrayal

Jesus, I'm reeling.
That word.
"Friend." You called him Your friend.

Jesus, I'm confused.
He used You. He traded You. He thought the cash was better.
"Friend." Is that sarcasm in Your voice? Surely You don't mean it?

Jesus, I'm furious.
That revolting backstabber catalyzed Your torture.
"Friend." Just stop. A friend wouldn't do this.

Jesus, I'm aching.
You shared Your table. You washed his feet.
"Friend." Is Your heart not also breaking?

Jesus, O Jesus.
But of course. How could I not see?

Jesus, I'm remembering—
Your life is a series of mercies.
Friend. You eagerly offer Yourself as that.

Jesus, I'm lamenting.
My heart is just as treacherous. I so often trade You for lesser things.
Friend? You should retract the title.

Jesus, I'm on my knees.
Have mercy on me, a sinner.
Friend. Forgive me. Come near.

Jesus, I'm lifting my eyes,
Seeing Your extended arms. Your affectionate gaze.
Friend. I'm struck by the radiance of Your unwavering tenderness.

Jesus, I'm singing for joy.
Hallelujah, to the truest friend!
Friend. Forevermore.

Jesus, You called Your betrayer friend.
Jesus, You still do.

Peter Denies Jesus

A fire lights the figures huddled around
And casts flickering light on the walls.
I edge a bit closer, a wary eye
On the gate into the palace halls.

One servant turns, and every head
Follows to see who approaches.
I slip into the circle
As one says, "You were with Jesus."

"I don't know what you're talking about."
What am I doing? What have I said?
I swore I'd defend Him and never leave,
That I'd follow until I'm dead.

"I don't know the man!"
My chest pounds and face flushes.
Ears ringing and fists clenching,
My heart collapses but tongue lashes:

"By God's name, I don't know him!"
And in that moment I'm done.
With one curse I've damned myself,
Using God's own name to deny His Son.

Out of the dark a cock crows
As the gate creaks open.
There I see Him, flanked by His abusers.
My Messiah. My friend. My hope.

Christ Himself in chains
With a thorned crown that mocks.

I hope He hasn't heard—
At that thought, my soul balks.

Of course He has,
But worse, He didn't need to,
For my rashly spoken words
Were nothing new.

Tears well and my soul retreats.
I want to cry out as He
Is marched past. But then—
He turns and looks at me.

My Rabbi, the Promised One,
Looks at me as always,
With no accusation,
Only love in His eyes.

The Trial

Evil lit its lamp of darkness
And carried my Lord away.
At Gethsemane my courage left me;
Cowardice took its place.

Still, I followed the chaotic chants,
Walking at a self-preserving distance.
I stopped to warm myself by a fire.
I stood in the way of the wicked.

“Have you no answer to make?”
Caiaphas questioned Jesus, through gritted grimace.
But even then my Lord remained silent;
I stared desperately, with vehemence.

“Tell us if you are the Christ.”
Tell me, I must hear it, too.
Why won't You be straightforward?
I need my hope in You renewed.

I found repulsive relief
As Your blood fell upon the stone,
That it was not my own.
Yet at that, my soul began to groan.

My body began to tremble
As the eyes of my Lord met mine.
Just before You were struck,
My loyalty began to resign.

My decreasing faith
Struck me with fear.

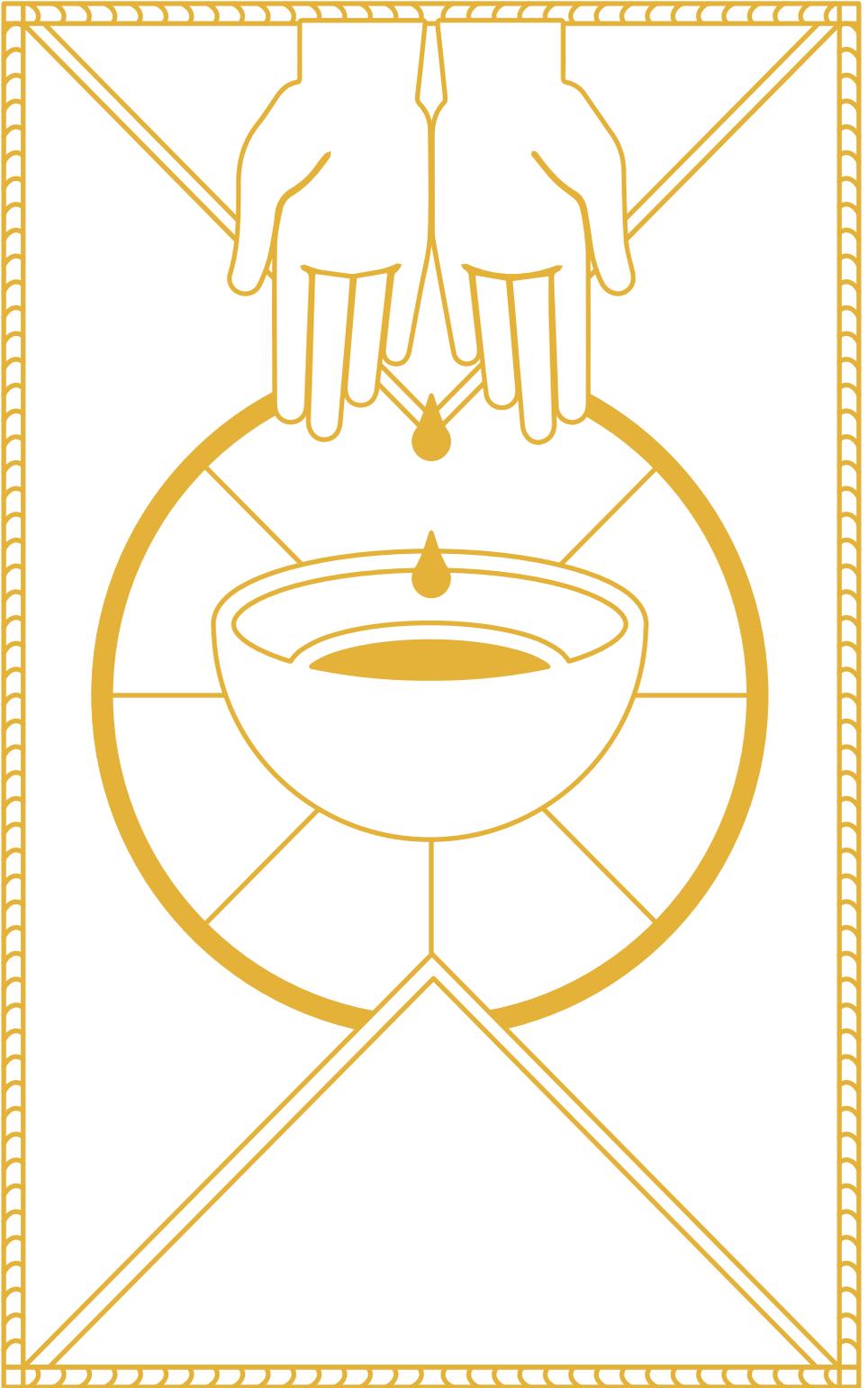
If my Lord is the Christ,
Why is His suffering so severe?

These hypocrites are murderous;
Their accusations, unjust.
Show them the power coming on the clouds.
Show them the authority You showed us.

But who am I to speak.
I need mercy, for I am a sinner.
I'm just like these religious hypocrites,
Only without power and vigor.

Let this Man die for me.
Better one than the many.
My Lord, forgive me this iniquity;
Help me love You more than any.

Yes, Lord, help me love You more than any.
Help me love You more than any.
Lord, I believe You are the Christ;
Help me love You more than any.



PILATE DELIVERS JESUS TO BE CRUCIFIED

⁶ Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked. ⁷ And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. ⁸ And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them. ⁹ And he answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" ¹⁰ For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up. ¹¹ But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead. ¹² And Pilate again said to them, "Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" ¹³ And they cried out again, "Crucify him." ¹⁴ And Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him." ¹⁵ So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

¹⁶ And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. ¹⁷ And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. ¹⁸ And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹ And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him. ²⁰ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.

Jesus and Barabbas Before the Judgment Seat

Behold, two prisoners,
Both bound and on display
Before the judgment seat,
Awaiting the mercy of a mob:

Jesus Bar-Abbas,
Son of a father:
Declared guilty,
Yet fated to go free.

Jesus Bar-Joseph,
Son of the Father:
Found faultless,
Yet destined to die.

Behold, two insurrectionists,
Both rabble-rousers,
Plotting to overthrow
The rulers and authorities:

Rebelling against a worldly kingdom,
One calls his people to arms.
Living by the sword,
He takes life.

Heralding His kingdom to the world,
One calls His people to surrender.
Living by the Word,
He forfeits life.

Behold, two goats,
Each prepared for a purpose,
A sacrifice
For the sins of the people:

One a scapegoat,
Chosen by lot
To wander the wilderness,
Burdened by a nation's shame.

One a blood offering,
Offering the very blood
That would cleanse the hands
Of those who slaughter.

Behold, prophecy made plain,
Foreshadowing fulfilled,
The Messiah made manifest.
Behold: the true Day of Atonement.

The Crowds Cry “Crucify Him!”

He came to them.
He healed their sick.
He raised their dead.
For which of these
Do they cry, “Crucify Him?”

The chief priest cries,
“Are you the Christ,
the Son of the Blessed?”
Christ answers—*I Am*.
The chief priest shrieks,
Strikes, and spits on Him.

Bound, He’s brought before
Pilate who finds no fault,
Yet he cares not for
What is just, only what
Preserves peace in the crowd
Gathered outside his court.

“Shall I give you your King?”
Pilate shouts. The chief priests
Descend to provoke the crowd
Who, with the same mouths
Sang hosanna, now cry,
“Crucify Him!”

Pilate Condemns Jesus

What kind of king

Is bound by His own priests and elders
And delivered to me at daybreak
On the day of their sacred feast,
Having inspired envy and bloodlust,
Which cannot be quelled by mockery,
Nor sated by the nine-tails' teeth?

What kind of king

Chooses silence as His shield
Against an onslaught of accusation,
Denies not a single charge
And respects not my judgment seat,
Yet troubles my poor wife's dreams,
Disturbing both our peace?

What kind of king

Boasts of lands that cannot fatten
And followers who refuse to fight,
Declares truth, not decrees,
And risks the wrath of Caesar
By claiming to be the Christ
Of a scattered and subjected people?

What kind of people

Thrice cry, "Crucify!"
Demand mercy for a murderer
Over Him in whom no guilt is found,
And dare not enter my gates for fear of defilement,

Yet welcome this Man's blood upon their heads
And their children's also?

So be it.

Take Him.

Take your King.

Take your kill.

I wash my hands of Him.

I wash my hands of His blood.

I wash my hands.

THE LORD'S SERVANT

¹ Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. ² He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; ³ a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. ⁴ He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law.

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⁴ The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. ⁵ The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward. ⁶ I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. ⁷ But the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame. ⁸ He who vindicates me is near.

—Isaiah 42:1–4; 50:4–8a

Yet He, My Savior

I cast Him down
Before a corrupt tribunal
To be assaulted by accusations,

Yet He brought me into a heavenly courtroom
To plead my innocence and accept the penalties
For crimes I committed against Him.

I opened my mouth
To mock and scorn my Maker,

Yet His words set the universe into motion,
Upholding the heavenlies
And the pulse of my own raging heart.

I abused my authority
To humiliate Him. I stripped Him bare;
I exposed the King of glory
For laughs and jeers,

Yet He surrendered His position and power
To clothe me with mercy and compassion.
He exchanged my filthy rags
For His white robe of righteousness.

I crowned the head of my Healer
With a halo of twisted thorns
And bludgeoned the brow
Of the Son of God.

Yet He crowned me
With His royal diadem
Of steadfast love and mercy.

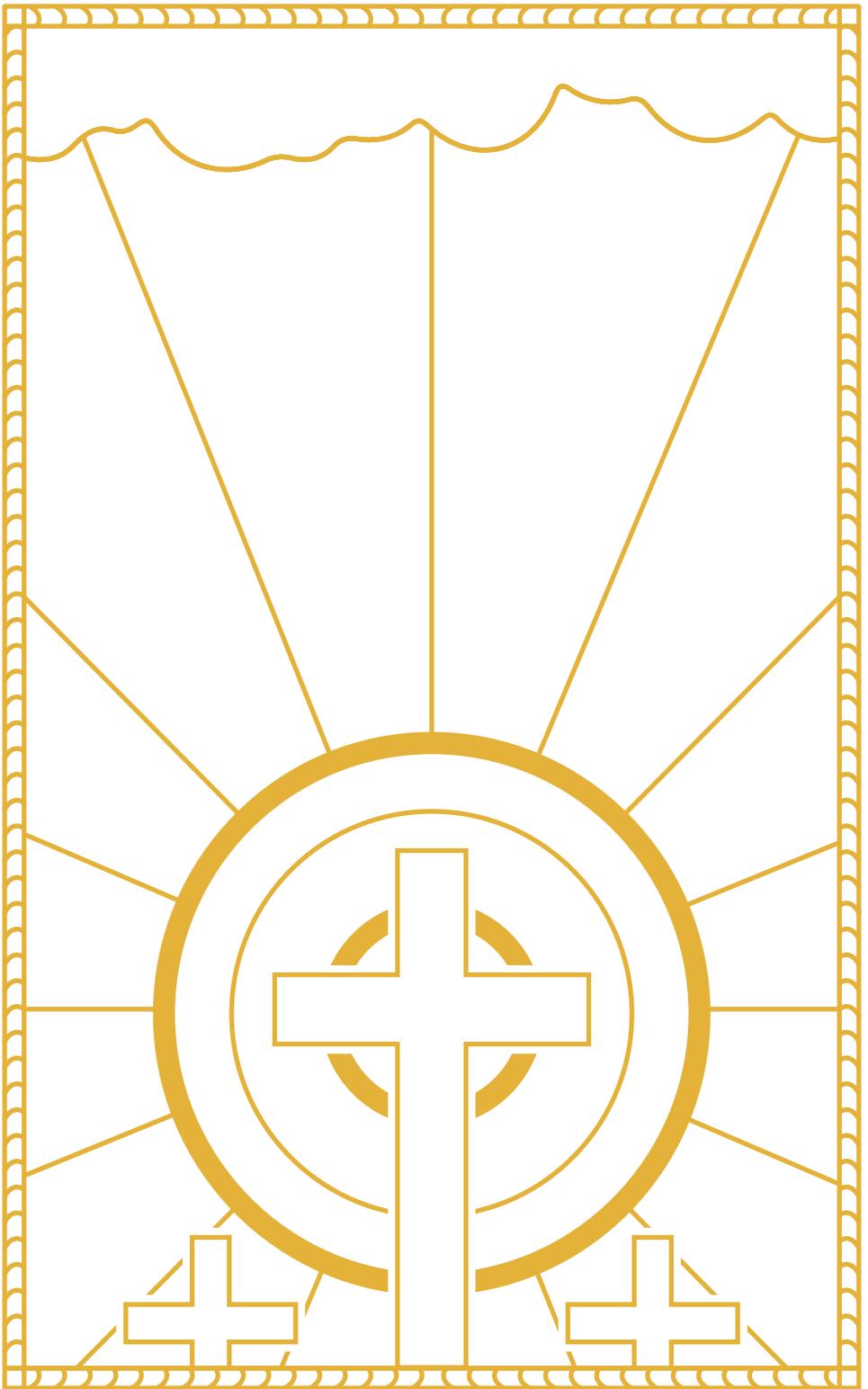
He forgave all my iniquities,
Healed all my diseases,
And redeemed my life from the pit.

I led him down a violent road
Toward a tangled, cursed tree
Where crimson streams flowed
From His innocent hands.

Yet He led me to still streams
Of living water and green pastures
For my nourishment, healing,
And restoration.

And yet, despite my horrendous acts of treason,
I have become the recipient of
Divine mercy,
Forgiveness,
And grace—

I was His enemy,
 Yet He was my Peacemaker,
I was His accuser,
 He, my heavenly Intercessor.
I tormented Him.
 Still He healed me.
I humiliated Him—
 Still He defended me.
I became His mocker,
 Yet He became my Advocate.
I, His murderer,
 Yet He, my Savior.



THE CRUCIFIXION

²⁵ And it was the third hour when they crucified him. ²⁶ And the inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” ²⁷ And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹ And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, ³⁰ save yourself, and come down from the cross!” ³¹ So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³² Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also reviled him. ³³ And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” ³⁵ And some of the bystanders hearing it said, “Behold, he is calling Elijah.” ³⁶ And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.” ³⁷ And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸ And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!” ⁴⁰ There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. ⁴¹ When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

Christ Crucified

There hung our Savior King upon the cross of crucifixion.

Bloody stripes that brought us healing spoke of Your torment.
Nails driven through Your limbs
Bonded Your flesh to the rugged wood.
Each struggling breath—agony.
Oppressed, afflicted, bruised, beaten, and scarred,
Bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows, You hung there,
Stricken by God. The anguish of our sin rested fully upon You.
Your disciples watched, lamented, and mourned
As You were mocked by the crowd in attendance that day.
Despised and rejected by mankind, yet Your sinless lips
Uttered the words, “Father, forgive them.”

There hung our Savior King upon the cross of crucifixion.

The two who hung beside You deserved their brutal deaths,
Yet You opened one’s eyes to see You.
You are the Christ.
Your body breaking and shaking with pain,
You spoke and saved this man. “Today you will be with me
In paradise.” Mercy rained upon him; grace flooded his soul—
The same salvation he received, You offer to all who believe.

Compassion filled Your tormented body
As You looked upon the woman who raised You,
The brother You disciplined and loved.
You said to the mother, “Behold, your son,”
To the brother, “Behold, your mother.”
Even in grief, You are mindful of us.
Even in heartache, You richly provide.

Knowing this cup of wrath was our path to salvation—
The only way for us to be unified with God again—
You, on that day, chose to become our sin.
Perfectly purchasing our pardon, You spoke the words
That fulfilled prophecies and rippled throughout history:
“My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?”

There hung our Savior King upon the cross of crucifixion.

Thorns, that once birthed beautiful red roses, drew blood
From the brow of the King of kings. You, King Jesus,
Bore our iniquities. Every scar, every wound, every ache,
Every breath—testaments of the weight and wrath we deserved.
And as You spoke the words, “I am thirsty,” knowing
You’d never thirst again, You hung there,
Bearing the weight of our sin.
Moment by moment and word by word, You ensured
Everything said about You was true. You cried,
“It is finished,” and it was.

You are the Christ,
The only One to purchase those You love.
You are the one true God who came and lived among us.
You, not Death, decided when You would give
Your body as the spotless sacrifice. The final words
From Your lips brought our hope but ended Your life:
“Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit.”

There, You died.

The earth shook, darkness covered the light
Of day—all of creation mourned alongside
The followers of the Truth, the Life, the Way.
You, our sinless Servant, gave Your life,
Christ Jesus, the spotless sacrifice.

There hung our Savior King upon the cross of crucifixion.

It Is Finished

For three hours
The world wore darkness,
Trembling with the weight of glory,
As the Son who was Light
Before the earth was formed
Hung dying on a cross.

“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

Such separation between

The Divine

And

The created:

The temple curtain unyielding, thick
With the holiness of God, closed off
From the waywardness of man.
Most intimate God to be revealed;
Through death would come Life.

“Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit!”

And the earth shook in agony,
The veil torn, fractured from top to bottom,
Every rock and tree and stalwart mountain
Set to proclaim God’s grandeur
Raged against the rending of the law
Upon which this world existed
Until—
Torn and broken, were never uttered
Such victorious words:

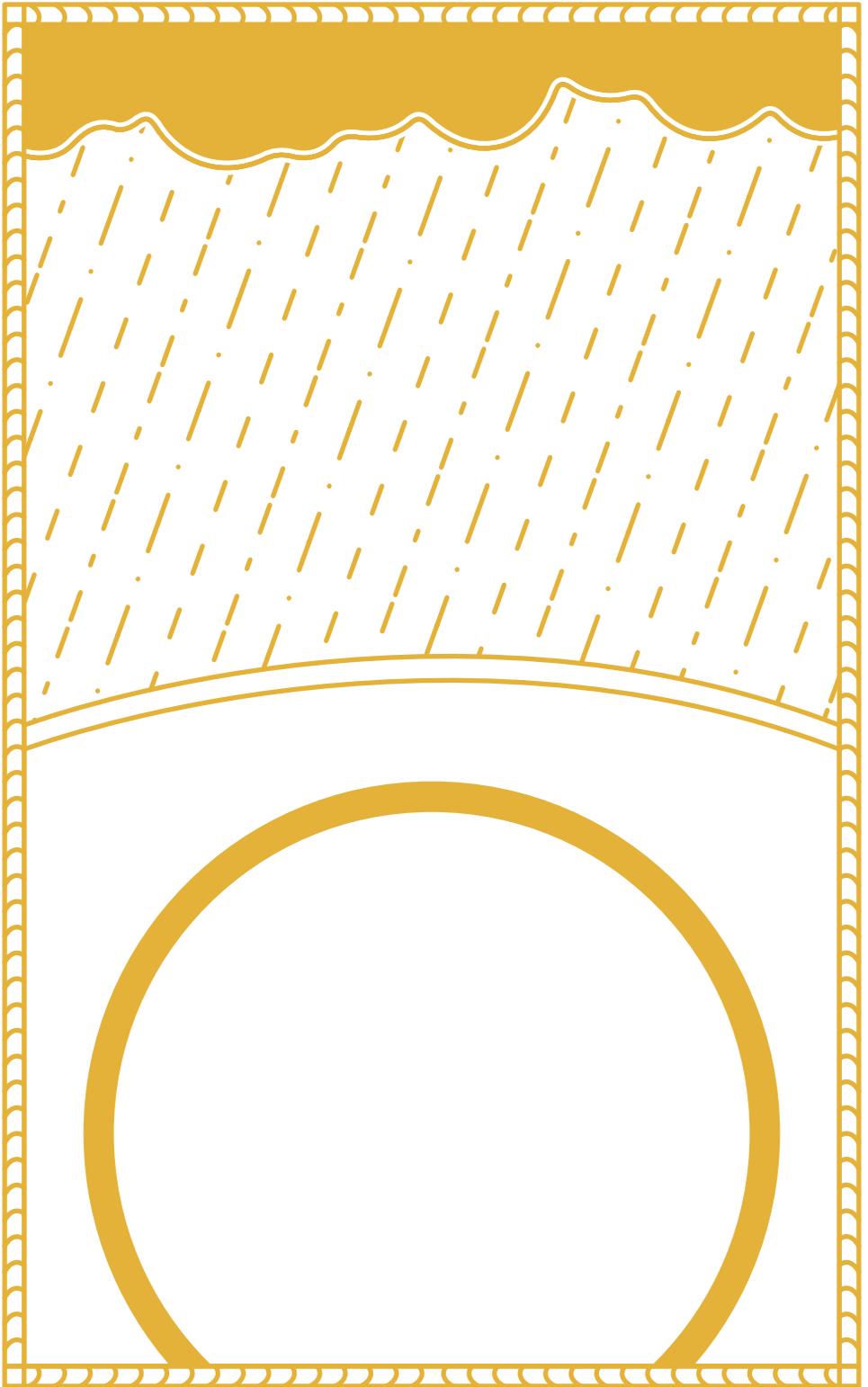
“Truly, this was the Son of God!”

All who were there bore witness
To the King of creation
In His Father’s will, abiding.

And the people beat their breasts,
Thick with the knowledge
He has always been
Who
He said
He was.

“It is finished.”

Such simple words
To change
The world.



THE DEATH OF JESUS

²⁵ When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, ²⁴ so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the Scripture which says,

“They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

So the soldiers did these things, ²⁵ but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

²⁸ After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” ²⁹ A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. ³⁰ When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

—John 19:23–30

The Women Bear Witness

None of us understood when He said to deny ourselves
Was to die, that to take up our cross meant a cross.
No, I can't say that, not here, not at the "Skull."
Here, we are stripped of deceit. Maybe the truth is
We didn't want to understand, hoped He was talking in riddles.

"Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" He asked.
I rose to my feet and stepped back. I sensed, perhaps,
That I ought not to speak. But my sons—those sons of Zebedee,
As foolish and rash as Peter—interrupted:
"Yes, Lord, we are able."

But where are they now, my sons? They darted away
Like the rest of them, abandoned Him to the soldiers
In the garden and refused the cup of cross and sour wine,
While we, the women, remain. We observe the cup,
And it is gall. How we wish not to drink it!

But we do. We stay. We will not leave Him, not even
When He breathes His last. We will stand and watch
And wait with Jesus, our Teacher and beloved Friend,
Alert to what's next, like watchmen waiting for morning,
Like watchmen waiting for morning.

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Standing with my friends,
Standing for hours shaped like days,
We dare not look up, yet we cannot look away
From the woman who wondered at His conception,
Her despair as she stares at His bloody body once more.

But die—really die—Jesus? Surely He won't. He can't.

He who healed and multiplied, who calmed and revived,
He who expelled seven swirling demons
From my body and sent them to their demise—
Should He now meet His own?

So many hours spent in silence as the sky
Turns black, the earth groans through the afternoon,
And we—we wait, we the women who cooked
And cleaned, who walked and labored as we followed
Our Teacher, our Brother, our Friend.

The crowd taunts and jeers, gossips and whispers.
But we wait. We will not leave Him.
We will watch this unfolding horror, this appalling gore,
In silence. A shared whisper, a unified chorus:
We will not leave You.

•

Faithful friends until the last, these women,
Ebenezers. They did not want their Friend to bleed
And die alone.

We are the future generation, blessed by those who waited,
By those mothers and sisters and companions who loved
The Savior more than they feared His enemies.

Let us learn. Let us tarry in their example, their kindness
A fortress against the despair of death. Before they knew
What the cross meant, they were simply friends, devoted.

He, Jesus, our Savior, now risen and magnified,
Waits for *us*—He never leaves nor forsakes.
In the silence, He is there.

When we feel forgotten, He remembers.
When the darkness of death looms near,
He sticks closer than a brother.

Always present and working, in perfect constancy,
He intercedes for His friends. He is our Watchman,
Pointing, always, toward Glory.

And just as His friends waited with Him,
He waits with us for morning.
He waits with us for everlasting morning.

Mary's Lament

O, how I long to return to the day
He was nestled deep in the sanctuary of my womb.
There,
He was safe,
Hidden from all who could harm Him.

No one prepared me for this.
I waited with such anticipation for the birth of my Son,
Knowing that bringing Him into this world
Would be a pain immense,
But this—

This is an ache unbearable.
I refuse to be comforted,
For my Child is no more.

Let the men tear their garments;
Let the women weep and wail;
For their Messiah has been slain by their own hands.

Where are you LORD?
Why have You allowed Him to suffer?
Did You not say You would prosper Him?
Did You not say He was your Promised One?
Have You turned Your face away from Your Son?

My soul is downcast within me.
Hope has been removed from me;
For the LORD has given,
And the LORD has taken away.

Let the children of Israel lament;
Let their cries be heard on Mount Zion;
For their Messiah has been slain by their own hands.

O LORD,
You were there in His conception—
Are You still here in His death?
Are You grieved to see Him this way?
Do You mourn Him?

O, that my head were a spring of water,
And my eyes a fountain of tears!
I would weep day and night
For the death of my Son,
For I am overcome with grief.

Still, for God alone
My soul waits in silence;
From Him comes my salvation.
He alone is my rock and my fortress.

Trust in Him at all times, O my soul.
Pour out your heart before Him;
For God is a refuge for His beloved.

O LORD,
Restore assurance within me
That Your plan is perfect,
You will not allow Your Holy One to see decay.
Comfort my sorrowful soul,
Be near, O LORD,
To Your brokenhearted.

JESUS IS BURIED

³⁸ After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. ³⁹ Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy- five pounds in weight. ⁴⁰ So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹ Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴² So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

—John 19:38–42

Nicodemus at the Cross

Three years have passed,
But Your words still ring in my head.

“The Son of Man must be lifted up,”
And here You are,
Lifted like the snake in the wilderness
And just as cold and lifeless.

“Light has come into the world, and the people loved darkness.”
Your light was too blinding, Your goodness too grand.
They ran, they covered, they covered their shame.
For love of self, they killed Love itself.

“Are you a teacher and don’t know these things?”
I could fill a library with the things I don’t know.
The questions come relentlessly,
A litany of unresolved tension.

*Why do I keep coming to You at night?
What kept me from defending You?
Was it my power? My pride? Myself?
Is it too late?*

“God loved the world this way: He gave His one and only Son.”
We receive this extravagant Gift
With trembling hands and blurred vision,
Wrapping it tenderly in myrrh, aloe, and cloth.

*My Teacher, in life and death.
My Lord, deserving of a king’s burial.
My Friend?
My... Savior?*

“You must be born again.”

Is this what it feels like?
Sprinkled with clean water,
Stone heart replaced with flesh?

“The wind blows where it pleases.”

I feel the night breeze at my back.
It propels me forward,
Reminding me I still have breath.

“Anyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.”

I want to believe You are the Son of Man.
If that is true, then the story is not over;
I'll see You in three days, like You promised.

Three years have passed,

And Your words still ring in my head,
My Teacher in life, and now also in death.

Joseph of Arimathea Lays Jesus in the Tomb

Weighted steps, each counted.
The silence rings through the crowds
As I tread, marked by reddened cheeks
And swollen eyes, to ask for dignity
Among the scoffers, of whom
I find myself the same.

Coming to the place my courage failed,
With quaking bones and grief-bent,
I find a new reckoning, and with it, voice.

Horrified, the words still heavy on my lips,
My disbelief and shock contend for aid
As he summons proof of the passing Light.
My guilt-cast wondering ensues—
Where was my courage to protest before?
Can our hands be washed of this?

Confirmation comes; my grief renews.
What gains I've counted, fade
In the Light's descent to dark.

Returning to the altar-cross,
My body weakened by this gloried loss,
I fix my gaze upon my King,
My breath shallowed by reeking death.

I am powerless to pull
Nails from His hands, His feet—
The result of my refusals.

The body slain, disfigured by brutality,
Draws out my iniquity.

Thorns press upon my skin. Bloodied,
We remove the mocking crown.
We carry His body, now covering
My guilt and shame afresh.

The stench of death mingles
With the floating scent of myrrh,
My ceaseless tears upon the ground.
As crimson pierces linens white,
My heart sinks further into night.

My tomb now filled by Glory's Light,
Hope laid silent in the night.
This sealed tomb, a resonance—
The world, in darkness swept.

Selab

HE WAS PIERCED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS

¹⁵ Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. ¹⁴ As many were astonished at you—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—¹⁵ so shall he sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.

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¹ Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? ⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

—Isaiah 52:13–53:12

Blessed, Holy Sabbath

Saturday, blessed, holy Sabbath,
The day our Lord took His rest.

In six days You made the heavens and earth,
The sea, and all that is in them,
And rested on the seventh day.
So too it was with this Sabbath day—You rested.

Your body lay in that gracious grave,
Stone rolled, tomb sealed—dark, dank, still.
While all creation held its collective breath,
The women wept, disciples wondered,
Not knowing they were waiting in their Sabbath rest.

Saturday, blessed, holy Sabbath,
The day our Lord took His rest.

You made the Sabbath for man, not man for the Sabbath,
And though we may forget, You are Lord even in our rest.

From the echoes of Your final words, “It is finished,”
Until the stone was rolled away, You were working
Among your people, in the middle of their wait.

Selab

From the beginning You were pointing to this day,
Before faith would become sight,
And in that day they would do nothing—
But be somber, still, and silent.

Throughout human history, a greater story has been on display,
From forming a people for Yourself

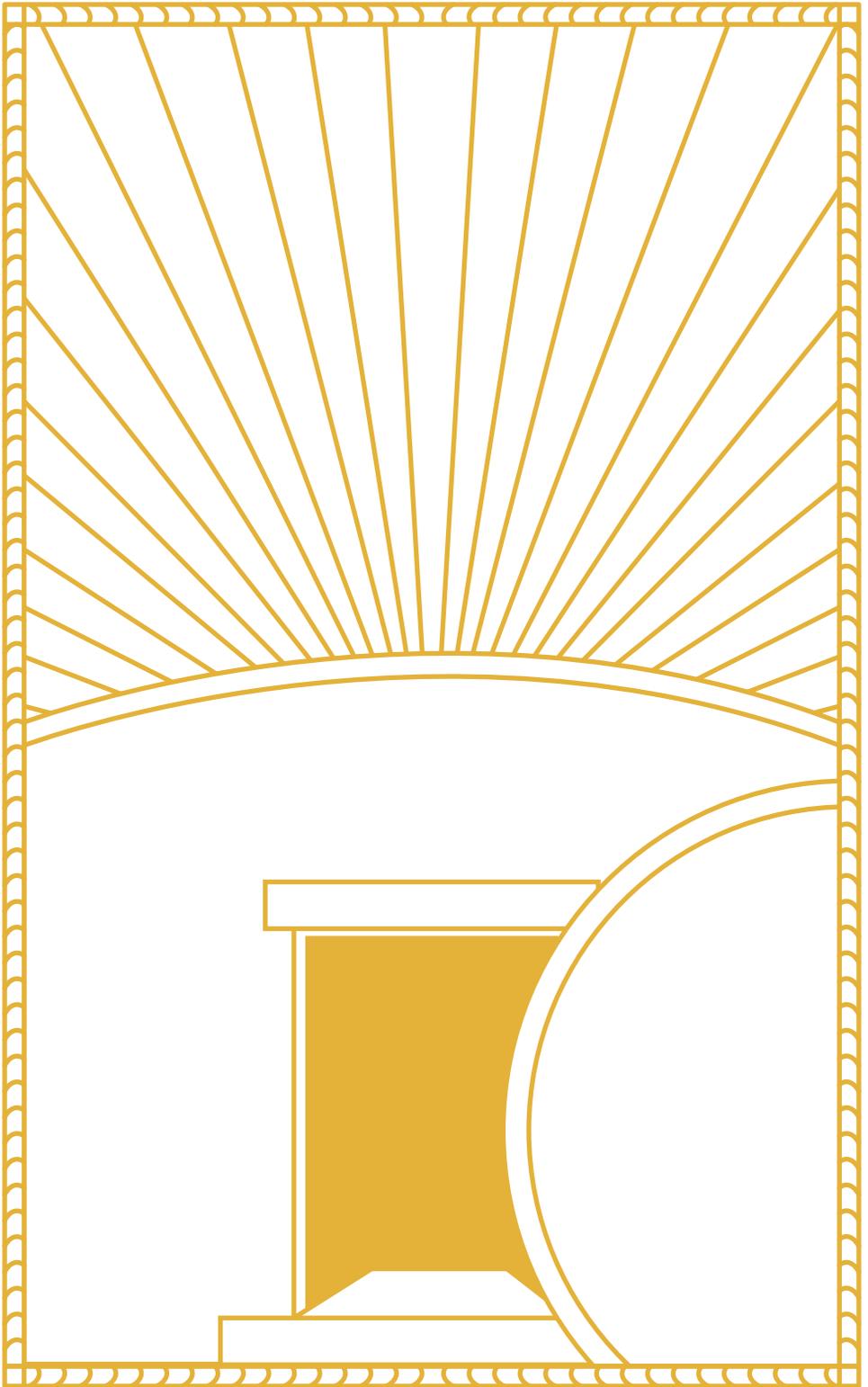
The Exodus and crossing of the Red Sea,
From the pursuit of Your people to a virgin giving birth,
You were always leading to a glorious day of rest.

Saturday, blessed, holy Sabbath,
The day our Lord took His rest.

For we know that Sunday came and You got up from the grave—
Now we rest in a different kind of wait.

With each passing holy Sabbath we will rest and hope in You,
'Til our faith be made sight, 'til the whole earth is made new,
And You, Lord, command our final tombs.

Saturday, blessed, holy Sabbath,
The day our Lord took His rest.



THE RESURRECTION

¹ Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” ³ So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴ Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷ and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to their homes. ¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³ They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” ¹⁴ Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her.

Christ the Savior Has Risen

LEADER: On this day, we remember
The resurrection of our Lord, Jesus the Christ.

This Jesus
Withstood accusation and abuse,
Enduring the agony of the cross
Until the point of death,
And persevered.

Like a rebellious shoot
Sprouting through a crevice of concrete,
He sprang up from the grave,
Resilient and determined,
Glorifying Himself in His victory over the evil one.

PEOPLE: **The tomb is empty.**

This King has risen in power,
Surprising everyone but the Father,
Fulfilling every word that was foretold,
Bringing into focus the blurred picture
Of the Father's redemptive plan for His children.

This is our Messiah!
He has brought salvation to His people.

Christ the Savior has risen!
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be
Born again to a living hope through the resurrection
Of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance
That is imperishable,

**Undefiled,
And unfading!**

In Jesus,
We, too, are resurrected,
Brought to life again
Through faith in all that He is,
And crowning Him
As the King of our hearts forevermore.

**Christ the Savior has risen!
We were buried with Him by baptism into death,
In order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead
By the glory of the Father, we, too, might walk
In newness of life.**

This path of newness of life has been paved for us
By the Son, whose perfect holiness
Gives direction to us as we follow Him
Through the gates of the Father's kingdom,
Our steps made straight by the Spirit.
For if we have been united with Him in death,
We shall certainly be united with Him in resurrection.

He is alive!

**All praises be to the One who was slain on our behalf!
He has graciously reconciled us to the Father, and
Invited us to sit with Him at the King's table forever!**

Christ the Savior has risen!

He has proven Himself worthy of all honor and glory!

Christ the Savior has risen!

ALL: *He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!*

Mary Magadlene Sees Jesus

The sun has not yet dared to dawn,
But darkness no longer invokes my fear—
Not like You on the cross, bloodied and nailed,
And the fact that You're no longer here.

I walk the path to where You were laid,
To where I watched them roll the stone in place.
How are You gone? How are You dead?
Am I never again to see Your face?

The other women and I approach the tomb,
As across the trail slithers a snake.
We stop and wait. A communal sigh.
And then the world begins to shake.

My body shudders; my vision's blurred.
The grieving earth trembles. Women shout.
A once-hazy memory now crawls to my skin,
Of the seven demons You cast out.

Quaking subsides. The brightness is blinding.
We get up, but the guards are struck dumb.
Standing before us in clothing of light—
An angel-man to earth has come.

“Don't be afraid. He is not here.
He has risen—just as He said!
Come look in the tomb and then tell everyone,
That Jesus is risen from the dead!”

Though dazzling to my eyes he may be,
His words confuse and sound like a lie.

Where have they taken You, Jesus, my Friend?
I just watched You suffer and die.

“Woman,” I hear, so I turn toward the word,
“Who do you seek? What is this burden you carry?”
I pause. Is this the gardener? Does he know where You are?
And then Your familiar, calm voice replies, “Mary.”

Confusion mingles with fearful hope.
Your empty tomb, Your discarded clothes...
My mind and heart both seize, then clear.
From the grave, O my God, You arose!

“Teacher! Teacher! You’re alive!” I cry,
Choking on tears, beholding Truth with my eyes.
You tell me to go and to tell what I’ve seen,
For I am the first to see You rise.

He looks like Jesus, and yet, He looks new,
I think as I race, my face flushed.
I hurry so fast that I narrowly miss
The snake on the path, its head crushed.

Mind moving fast, perhaps faster than feet,
I reflect: I saw You with my own eyes,
Touched Your feet with my hands and heard my own name,
But why am I the first to see You rise?

Why not Your closest, the two friends You love most?
Why not sweet Mary—Your mother?
This once demon-owned, unmarried wretch,
Is the first to glimpse our now-risen Brother.

You showed me such kindness, such love undeserved,
When I was stuck in the darkness I was due.
With one word Your light shone in, the evil ones fled;
You cleansed me, and I was made new.

That's why, I now realize, that I can be first
To see Your scars, Your immaculate face.
Though I don't deserve You, Your kindness, Your love,
You covered my shame in Your grace.

Still running—no, flying—I head to Your friends.
Though they'll scoff or accuse me of lies,
I know it to be true, for You said my name,
That I am the first to see You rise.

Yes, I am the first to see You rise.

Peter and John Run to the Tomb

Holy Spirit, prepare my heart this Easter.
Give me faith that is hopeful, curious, and eager,
Like Peter and John, hearing the news:
“The Lord has risen!”
Could this be true?

With despair now fading
And hope set ahead,
To the tomb they raced.
John first!
Peter in second place.

Out of breath they enter,
Christ’s words suddenly remembered:
“The Son of Man will be crucified,
But on the third day, rise.”

With the tomb empty,
And eternal life theirs,
They returned to their homes,
As brothers, friends, and now
Co-heirs.

No matter who is faster,
Their prize is the same:
Salvation for all
Who call upon His name.

•

O Jesus, thank You for Your resurrection from the dead.

Thank You for the life it brings,
Not only life to my soul,
But also life with my friends!

For if You were not raised,
Life is hopeless and relationships pointless.
But since You rose from the dead,
Like Peter and John,
I, too, can cherish light-hearted competition,
Playful humor,
And joyful friendship
With my brothers and sisters in Christ.

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Heavenly Father, thank You for my friend, _____.
Thank You for when we _____ together.
Thank You for our shared love of _____.

Help us to laugh together,
To joke together,
To compete together,
To have fun together,
And above all, to worship You together.

Amen.

Worship Arising for the Risen One

LEADER: Death has not just been overcome,
But overthrown, its sting swallowed up in victory.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God,
Who gives us this victory through His Son.
How might our reveling in Easter traditions
Reveal this Easter triumph?**

Jesus, we see the collective brightness
Of Lenten candlelight progressively dimming,
Darkness marching to Calvary's doorstep,
As death descends upon You.

**But Easter Sunday is not a morning for mourning.
Grave was the defeat—
His empty grave the victory!
Candles are lit anew
As Your light shines forth brightly.
It will not be overcome by darkness.**

Jesus, on our Friday we rest from our work,
Some of us somberly,
Because You were arrested and murdered on Yours.

**In pausing from work,
We remember the wages of our sin is death.
A wage we earned, yet paid by You,
Though You did nothing to deserve it.**

Still, our cross You carried,
Spending Yourself upon it to the point of death.

**But—
Good Friday soon became good news!
Echoing,
Everlasting,
From an empty tomb.**

Jesus, when we look at ourselves in the mirror,
Dressed in our Sunday best, may we see
You—crowned in thorns and draped
In a robe of ridicule.
You—clothed in holy humility.
You emptied Yourself to rescue us.
You—clad no longer in burial linens,
A lifeless Man no longer.

**Jesus, You've resurrected us,
Dressed us in Your robe of righteousness.**

Jesus, in attending a sunrise service,

**We remember You, the Son rising,
First from the table to wash feet,
Then from the dead.
You did not come to be served, but to serve.**

Jesus, as children hunt eagerly, hopefully
For Easter egg treasures,

**We remember Mary, who looked longingly and
Asked, "Where have you laid Him?"**

Jesus, in feasting with friends and family, bellies full
With food and laughter,

**We remember You secured our reservation
At the banqueting table.
One day You will wipe away our every tear.**

**From Your fullness we have all received,
Grace upon grace.**

Jesus, let these traditions awaken
Our worship of You!

**Like Jerusalem's hosanna branches,
May our traditions fan our focus
And praises upward toward You,
Our risen Redeemer!**

Blessed be the God and Father
Of our Lord, Jesus Christ!
According to His great mercy,

**He has caused us to be born again to a living hope
Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ
From the dead, to an inheritance
That is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,
Kept in heaven for us.**

May we trumpet these truths with our traditions.
Let our thanks and praises arise, for He has risen!

ALL: *He has risen, indeed!*

Peace Be with You

LEADER: O God, anguish resides deep within us.
Our relationships are twisted.
Our view of ourselves is marred,
And the world is in disorder.

PEOPLE: **Our relationship with You is broken.**

We're made to want peace.
We long for the peace experienced
By the first man and woman who walked daily
With You in the serenity of Eden.

Their relationship with everything was perfect.

But the darkest kind of unrest intruded that place.
So along with every generation before us,
We spend our lives attempting to build bridges to
Reclaim the goodness of that garden.
Though carefully crafted, this consuming work
Is done with rotten timber—so we resort to barriers.

**We build walls between ourselves
And everything else.**

Like your disciples, Jesus, we conspire
To manufacture our security.
We bar the beam to keep the chaos out
And give ourselves quietly to a long evening.

**It seems as if all that is good has died, and we forget
That You promised resurrection.**

[A MOMENT OF SILENCE IS TAKEN.]

But nothing has ever prevented You
From keeping Your promises—not sin nor even death.
Through a locked door You entered in, breathing again,
Your hands outstretched.
Your disciples felt the scars of the risen King
And heard it said,

ALL: *Peace be with you.*

One of the most amazing moments in history
Was Your appearance to Your beloved disciples,
And Your first word was, “Peace.”
Three times You said it, this weighty, beautiful word,

And still we do not fully understand.

Some of us do not feel peace.
With Thomas we proclaim, “Unless I lay my hand
Inside His side and see where nails did reside,
I will never believe.”
Weakened, sorrowful, we inquire:
*“Do You know what happened here?
Do You know what we fear?
Resurrected One, are we to bear this fate alone?”*

**Your presence feels like a distant memory, Jesus,
And we beg Your scarred hands to hold us.**

We want to experience the gladness
The disciples felt when they saw You.
We observe their joy
When we read this marvelous account,
But when the story is over,
We don’t see You in our room saying,

ALL: *Peace be with you.*

Yet these words, through the ages,
Never meant an end to trouble.
Your followers knew severe suffering,
But they also knew the One
Who overcame an infinitude of brokenness.

We know that same Jesus.

Even though every day may be an earthquake
Of sorrow or distress,
A single word from You is enough to calm a storm.
You broke down the dividing wall of hostility.
Your scars are the proof
Of a permanent peace we have with You.

O God, guard our hearts and minds with Your peace.

We wait with longing for the hour of Your coming,
When all darkness will be erased from the face of the earth.
For the rest of eternity,
You will shelter us with Your presence
And wipe tears from our eyes.
Even now, You are near us, and in You we can rejoice.

**Be with us, O God of peace,
As we practice Your commands
And pray with thanksgiving
About everything we encounter.**

May we continually proclaim, to our hearts
And to the world:

**There is no peace apart from Jesus.
He Himself is our peace,
And He is with us now, saying,**

ALL: *Peace be with you.*

Adapted from
WORDS FOR SPRING

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