

TWO-MINUTE PRAYERS FOR HOLY WEEK

Spend two minutes each day of Holy Week in prayer, reflecting on the reality of your sin and finding hope and comfort in Christ's passion and resurrection for you.

All prayers are from the Lutheran Book of Prayer (St. Louis: Concordia, 2005).

PALM SUNDAY

Lord Jesus, King of kings, today again I praise You with my hosannas and welcome You as the King of my heart. Enter in and take full possession of me, body, heart, mind, and soul. As thousands and ten thousands today vow faithfulness to You until death, acknowledging that they have no other Savior, grant that I, too, join this great host of faithful people to realize both the enormity and bitterness of my sin as well as the course of plenteous redemption to which You committed Yourself.

I confess, gracious Savior, that I have not been as true to You as You have been to me. Other interests have placed themselves above You in my thoughts. Have mercy upon me, and forgive me my transgressions. Sprinkle me with Your blood and wash me clean from the stain of my sin. Strengthen my heart with the assurance of my adoption and transform me according to Your image by the daily renewing of my Baptism. Preserve me in the faith until the end of days, that I may behold You in glory forevermore. Hear my cry, King of my heart and Savior of my soul. Amen.

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK

Precious Savior, Lamb of God for sinners slain, graciously forgive me all my sins, and embrace me with Your tender love. I have failed to fear, love, and trust in You above all things. This I confess, O Lord. The love of life, the allurements of the present world, the glamour of success, and the favor of friends have enticed me away from You. These things would take possession of my heart. O Lord, let me not sell my soul for the passing treasures of this present world. If I have kissed You with the kiss of betrayal, kiss me, Lord, with the kiss of forgiveness, and embrace me again as Your own. Have mercy upon me!

Protect me from the cunning of Satan, the allurements of the world, and the wickedness of my own heart. You are my surest Friend; hold me that I do not stumble and fall. Guard my heart that the love of gold, the smiles of popularity, and the eagerness to succeed may not rob me of my salvation, which You so dearly bought with Your own blood. Above all, gracious Savior, let me not despair of Your mercy, but believe at all times that Your love is as boundless as the heavens and deeper than the sea. O Friend of sinners, let me not fall away from You. Keep me standing in Your grace until I shall stand in Your presence forevermore, to love You with a perfect love throughout all eternity. Amen.

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

Lord Jesus, compassionate Savior, plead for me in the hour of trial. You know my weaknesses and shortcomings; I cannot hide my sins from You. Pray for me, gracious Redeemer, lest I deny You. O Lord, You know that I have promised to be faithful to You, and nevertheless I have again and again sinned and offended You with my many transgressions and broken pledges. I am ashamed of myself. Yet I come to You, for there is no other Savior from sin. I have denied You, if not by word, then by my actions and conduct. O Lord, look upon me in mercy, and forgive me all my sins. I have not always confessed You to the world nor spoken of the hope within me. Gracious Savior, in Your great love, forgive me. Do not let me go on in my sin. Look into my heart, and make me ashamed of myself and truly penitent.

O Lord, You know that I love You. I am Yours. Help me to be more faithful, more devout, and more zealous. In this Holy Week, lead me to a deeper appreciation of the great sacrifice that was necessary for my redemption. And, Lord, in Your mercy look upon all Your erring, sinning, straying children and bring them back and restore them to grace. Draw us all to You with Your constraining love, and keep us steadfast, unfaltering, and true. Hear my petitions and prayers. Amen.

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

Lord Jesus, gracious Savior, I come to You in this sacred week to ponder upon Your great and wondrous love—love that led You to the cross that my sin might be blotted out and that I might be reconciled to my heavenly Father. O Christ, give me strength and grace to crucify my sinful desires and dedicate myself anew to You, who has loved me with an everlasting love and brought to me eternal salvation. I confess to You my sins. They are many, and You know them all. For each and every one of them You suffered the agony of the cross and shed Your precious blood that I may be cleansed and made acceptable in Your sight. Let me not go through this day unmindful of Your great love. Let none of the sins of yesterday cling to me. Humbly I come, seeking Your mercy. Daily let me fulfill the tasks and duties to which You have called me with joy, confessing You as my Lord and Savior, and being of service to my neighbor.

Grant that Your suffering and death, proclaimed for the salvation of mankind, may, by the power of the Holy Spirit, awaken in many a deeper love for You. O Lord, have mercy upon me and all sinful mankind, and create in me and all that seek You a clean heart, holy desires, and an undying love. Hear my prayer, gracious Redeemer. Amen.

HOLY THURSDAY

Eternal Savior, how can my heart show its appreciation of Your love? How can I serve You best, who has loved me and given Your life for me? You have sealed to me the forgiveness of all my sins and offered me reconciliation and peace in the blessed Sacrament You instituted on this day. You have promised to give me, with the bread and the cup, Your body and blood for the remission of all my sins. Oh, what amazing love! What riches of divine wisdom! In awe and wonderment I ponder this gracious gift. May I ever appreciate this blessed Sacrament that You have bidden me to use as a memorial of Your death and a monument of Your redemptive love. May I come worthily each time I approach Your altar.

O Savior, cast me not away from Your presence. Let not my sins remain with me because of impenitence of heart or because I doubt Your Word and promises. Let me become one with You and all Your saints as I receive with them this blessed Sacrament. Make me Yours, and give me strength to amend my sinful life and walk closer to You.

Preserve in Your Church this blessed Sacrament, given on this sacred day. Let thousands and ten thousands find through it the assurance of forgiveness, peace, and salvation. And grant that I and all who are Yours may be faithful to Your Word and Sacraments, that Your name be glorified, Your will be done, and we at last live with You in Your eternal kingdom forevermore. Amen.

GOOD FRIDAY

O Christ, Lamb of God, slain for the sin of the whole world, with penitent heart I come to Your cross, pleading for mercy and forgiveness. My sins—and they are many—have added to the burden of Your suffering and have nailed You to the accursed tree. For me You tasted the agony of the utter darkness that I might not perish, but have everlasting life. Have mercy upon me.

O Christ, Lamb of God, embrace me with Your love, and forgive me all my sins. Your death brings healing to my soul, peace to my mind, cleansing to my heart. If You would mark iniquity, I could not come, for my hands are unclean, my lips are sullied, and my heart is blackened by sin. But beholding You bleeding, despised, forsaken, dying, pierced, I come to be cleansed and forgiven.

O Christ, Lamb of God, grant that I may hate sin and wickedness more and more as I behold You in Your great agony. My grateful heart today finds hope in Your words, comfort in Your promises, and salvation in Your finished work on the cross, by which You have overcome sin, Satan, and death.

O Lord, have mercy. O Christ, have mercy. O Lord, hear my prayer. Amen.

HOLY SATURDAY

Heavenly Father, I am silenced at the grave of Your Son, who knew no sin, yet was made sin for us. You permitted Him to die, exchanging His innocence for our guilt. In love He came to us, but He was rejected by hate. He taught us obedience, but men rebelled against Him.

I confess that a great mystery confronts me at this tomb of sin and death. He was buried behind the great seal of my sin and my death. By faith I know also that He who died is the One who unlocked the great secret of Your love. His tomb is my tomb. He carried with Him to the grave my sin and my death, that He might break their hold on me.

Trusting in the Lord's promise that He would rise again on the third day, I come not to mourn Him but to confess the sin that He would leave buried. Have mercy on me, O God! Have mercy on me. Amen.

EASTER

Hell took a body, and discovered God.
It took earth, and encountered Heaven.
It took what it saw, and was overcome by what it did not see.

O death, where is your sting?

O Hell, where is your victory?

Christ is risen, and you, O death, are annihilated!

Christ is risen, and the evil ones are cast down!

Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice!

Christ is risen, and life is liberated!

Christ is risen, and the tomb is emptied of its dead.

For Christ, having risen from the dead,
is become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

—From the Easter sermon of John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, ca. AD 400

O almighty and eternal God, who through the death of Your Son has destroyed sin and death, and by His rising to life again restored innocence and everlasting life, that being delivered from the power of the devil, I might live under You in Your kingdom, grant that I may be forever comforted by true faith in the resurrection of Your dear Son. Do not let the thought of death fill my heart with terror, but give me the blessed assurance that, just as You raised Christ from the dead, I will not remain in the grave but will rise again at the end of days. And when, by Your grace, I have finished my course, let Christ's resurrection be for me a sure pledge that an inheritance that does not fade is reserved for me in heaven. While I live, guide me with Your holy counsel, and when I die, give me the crown of life, that with all the holy angels and the elect I may praise and glorify You, world without end. Amen.