

Good Saturday morning! I'm sending this Good Friday meditation and service to you from the Hannaford's parking lot in Rockland. We haven't had Spectrum internet or cable or telephone service in Rockport for more than 24 hours..... SO, read below as if it was yesterday, so to speak.... If you don't hear from me via the web in the next 24 hours or more, it is because Spectrum has not gotten us up and running again in Rockport.... I'll be making some phone calls tomorrow if we're still "out at sea" internet wise..... It is interesting to think about all the years we never had access to high speed cyberspace ways of doing our everyday lives, eh?!

Thanks for your patience, trust and faith in these terribly challenging and difficult times.....  
Now, here's what I wanted to send out to you yesterday:.....

Good snow laden April day from a white hill in Rockport....

It is Good Friday – the most solemn day in the Christian calendar. It is the day the crucifixion of Jesus is remembered and experienced today through the reading of the four Gospel narratives detailing this dark day. Below is a Good Friday Service based on the telling of a portion of the story from the Gospel of Mark. As yesterday, I believe you will find this service more meaningful if you stop at each point indicated to read the details as Mark describes them. And don't forget to say the brief prayers along the way!

It would also be a good idea, if you have the time today -- and I think you do because we're all housebound at the moment! -- to read the story from all four of the Gospel tellings of it. In Matthew, it's Chapters 26-27. In Mark the full text is Chapters 14-15. In Luke, it's Chapters 22-23. In John, it's Chapters 18-19.

Perhaps more than any other time in our history over these past one hundred years, we can begin to grasp the depth and horror and sadness of this story because of what we are experiencing right now in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. Worldwide, nationally, and locally, we are in a time of upheaval, chaos, deadly distractions, and total unfamiliarity regarding how our current story is going to play out. Perhaps like Jesus' followers of so long ago, we face this pandemic terror with anxiety and fear, unknowing and feeling out of control. But.... remember that Easter is coming.... we must move forward, we must go on together, we must have hope that a better time is coming for us.... as long as we learn some important life lessons from our current situation....

I'm not sure I'll get a meditation out tomorrow, Holy Saturday. I'm working on a letter to Mary.... you know, Mary Magdalene, the only person who shows up at Jesus' tomb in all four of the Gospel tellings of his resurrection. I need to write to Mary between today and Sunday morning.... and figure out how to read you my letter so you can hear and see it on line as well as read it.... Who do you need to write to, before Sunday? Stay tuned.....

Blessings and love to all on this Good Friday, the day we remember Jesus' crucifixion.... Susan

### **A Good Friday Service**



### Opening Prayer

God of strength, gather us in - in this sacred space, in this sacred moment - For here we recall a story of faith, a story of manipulative powers, of human frailty, of cruelty and malice, and an act of unlikely grace. Here we remember who you are. Amen.

Scripture Reading -- Mark 14:55-65

### Words of someone who gave false witness

Okay, so I don't know exactly what he said, but he certainly said something about the temple. We all heard him, even though we were at the back, and it was a bit hard to decipher because the crowd was a bit testy by that stage. They were bickering and belly-aching about him and they were definitely talking about what it was that he said about the temple. So, when I asked by the chief priest what I'd heard, I told them what I'd heard, that he had said something about destroying the temple. Well, that's what they said they'd heard, and they just needed a couple of witnesses to say what they'd heard and since I was there and had heard it, I told them what I'd heard. As true as I'm standing here, that's what I heard.

### Personal Prayer

When we listen to hearsay and don't bother to search for veracity, forgive us, God of truth.

Scripture Reading -- Mark 14:66-72

### Words of a servant girl

I don't like people who lie. And I don't like people who accuse me of lying. I am not a liar. I know he was one of them, one of those who followed Jesus. I have seen him with Jesus, not just hanging around, as so many do, but right at Jesus' side, like he was one of the brotherhood. But he lied, and as I said, I don't like liars - so that's why I pushed the point. You just shouldn't lie. And when he started cursing, well, I don't like cursing either. You shouldn't curse, or swear a false oath, it's sinful.

### Personal Prayer

When we fail to speak honestly for the sake of our own advantage, forgive us, God of sincerity.

## Scripture Reading -- Mark 15:1-15

### Words of Barabbas

Mind-blowing. Implausible! Incredible! Bizarre. This whole situation is inconceivable. I stand here a free man. I should be hanging at the crossroads, yet another man has taken my place. We are not so different, Jesus of Nazareth and me, we both speak against the Roman invaders, we both long for a future when our people will be free, but I have done something that warrants my arrest and punishment; from what I have heard of Jesus, murder and anarchy are not his style. He seems more like the prophet who would win the people over with words of tenderness and love. But obviously they hate him for it.

### Personal Prayer

When we turn our backs from your tenderness and love, forgive us, God of mercy.

## Scripture Reading -- Mark 15:16-20

### Words of a soldier

This is not my land and these are not my people. I owe them no loyalty. I am a soldier of the Imperial Roman Army and my loyalty is to Caesar and the Empire. So, do not think I have any sympathy for a two-bit rebel from this tiny back alley of a nation, and do not think I care about his fate. He has committed treason by declaring to be a God, a King, and his punishment is death by crucifixion. No questions need to be asked. The process is clear.

### Personal Prayer

When we harden our hearts to the lives and suffering of others, forgive us, God of compassion.

## Scripture Reading -- Mark 15:21-32

### Words of a passerby

I was just passing and noticed something was up, and just couldn't stop myself from going to see what the ruckus was about. I didn't know him, the guy on the cross. Well I'd heard gossip about him, the strange things that had been happening around Galilee - lame people walking, blind people seeing, and something totally unbelievable about a dead man leaving his grave. No offence meant, but Galileans can be unreliable with the truth, so I didn't take much notice. But he'd obviously done something bad, this crowd was really riled up. They were shouting abuse and ridiculing him. Telling him to come down from the cross, demanding that he save himself. It was quite a spectacle, all that fury and passion flying around was

infectious, I found myself joining in. I left feeling quite virtuous, like I'd done my bit to get rid of a public nuisance.

Personal Prayer

When we are drawn into acts of injustice because of our inability to think independently, forgive us, God of integrity.

Scripture Reading -- Mark 15:33-39

Personal Prayer

When we cannot see, when we do not listen, when we remain silent, when we harden our hearts, when we fail to act, you love us still. Forgive us, God of the cross. Amen. (someone extinguishes the two remaining candles still lit)

Please leave this time and place of deep reflection in silence.....



This service is drawn from *Seasons of the Spirit* for Good Friday, 2015