The events of Holy Week tend to bolt past us like a freight train into the explosion of celebration that is Eastertide. This short season within the longer season of Lent contains some of the most significant and intense stories in the life of Jesus—his kingly entry into Jerusalem, his last supper with his intimate circle of friends, his lamenting prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, his betrayal and arrest, his ridicule, torture, and humiliation at the hands of the authorities, his death, and that deafening silence of grief. And yet somehow we speed through the stories, sometimes even ignoring the stories, to get to the good stuff of Easter.

From Sunday until Saturday, a lot takes place. Perhaps it is meaningful for us to feel all the different emotions—from the jubilation and excitement of Palm Sunday to the resounding stillness of Holy Saturday—at the same pace that they happened. The stories draw us into the same sense of confusion, anticipation, and grief that those who had witnessed these events underwent.

As we continue the contemplation of what it means to be pilgrims and wanderers in this life, it is important ask ourselves what we are missing along the way? What have we failed to see because we have rushed by? What have we let fade into the distance because of our fears of how it might change us?

In this Holy Week, join me in slowing down and immersing ourselves in the painful events of Jesus’ story. The Holy Week Refrain guide contains prayers, reflections, and spiritual practices to usher us into the heart of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.

“Death will be a quick turn, the winking of an eye but dying turns and twists and waits and teases.”

-Walter Brueggeman, from Easter in the Very Belly of Nothingness

Compiled by Hilary Ann Golden, MDiv

©2013 asacredjourney.net
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This *Holy Week Refrain* guide contains prayers, reflections, and spiritual practices to usher us into the heart of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. There is content for each of the three days, intended to provide opportunity for 30-60 minutes of prayer and reflection each day. Each day contains the same order of elements: Opening Prayer; singing of *What Wondrous Love Is This*; one or two Scripture Readings; a Spiritual Practice and Reflection; a Closing Prayer and singing of a *Kyrie*. Music for both *What Wondrous Love Is This* and the *Kyrie* can be found at the end of this guide.

It is my hope that this prayer guide will offer you guidance and space to reflect on aspects of this event-filled Holy Week. It is not a static prayer guide; it is adaptable to how it will best work in your household or community. The guide can also be adapted for either communal or personal use.

Blessings as you contemplate these three important days in the life of Jesus Christ our Lord.

* Hilary Ann Golden, MDiv
1. OPENING PRAYER

by Stephen M. Fearing

Abundant God,
in this Lenten wilderness
you take, break, and bless.
You take the bread, that holy manna of God,
and give it to us, your beloved.
You break the bread, your very body,
and give it to us, your servants.
You bless the bread, which is given for us,
and share it with all
that we might be sustained for the days ahead.

God of the covenant,
fulfill the promise that you have made with us;
the promise that you have made and kept
with those that have gone before us.
Gather us around this blessed table
that we might go forth in the difficult days ahead
assured of your unshakeable grace
and your steadfast love.
In the name of the One who takes, breaks, and blesses, we pray. Amen.

2. SONG

What Wondrous Love Is This?
see appendix for melody

1. What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul?
What wondrous love is this, O my soul?
What wondrous love is this that cause the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul?

2. When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,

3. SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 53:1-6 (NIV)

1 Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
3 He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.
4 Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

Luke 22 (NIV)

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

1 Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching, 2 and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. 3 Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. 4 And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. 5 They were delighted and agreed to give him money. 6 He consented, and watched for an opportunity to
hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.

The Last Supper
7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.”

9 “Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked.

10 He replied, “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, 11 and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ 12 He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.”

13 They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. 15 And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

17 After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. 18 For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. 21 But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. 22 The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!” 23 They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

24 A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. 25 Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. 26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. 27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. 28 You are those who have stood by me in my trials. 29 And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, 30 so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

31 “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

33 But he replied, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.”

34 Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.”

35 Then Jesus asked them, “When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?”

“Nothing,” they answered.

36 He said to them, “But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. 37 It is written: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors[b]; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.’

38 The disciples said, “See, Lord, here are two swords.”

“That’s enough!” he replied.

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives
39 Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.”

41 He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42 “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”

43 An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. 44 And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.[c]

45 When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. 46 “Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.”

Jesus Arrested
47 While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, 48 but Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

49 When Jesus’ followers saw what was going to happen, they said, “Lord, should we strike with our swords?”

50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.

51 But Jesus answered, “No more of this!” And he touched the man’s ear and healed him.

52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? 53 Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns.”
Peter Disowns Jesus

54 Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. 55 And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. 56 A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, “This man was with him.”

57 But he denied it. “Woman, I don’t know him,” he said.

58 A little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.”

“Man, I am not!” Peter replied.

59 About an hour later another asserted, “Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean.”

60 Peter replied, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.” 62 And he went outside and wept bitterly.

The Guards Mock Jesus

63 The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. 64 They blindfolded him and demanded, “Prophesy! Who hit you?” 65 And they said many other insulting things to him.

Jesus Before Pilate and Herod

66 At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. 67 “If you are the Messiah,” they said, “tell us.”

Jesus answered, “If I tell you, you will not believe me, 68 and if I asked you, you would not answer. 69 But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.”

70 They all asked, “Are you then the Son of God?”

He replied, “You say that I am.”

71 Then they said, “Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.”

4. SPIRITUAL PRACTICE + REFLECTION

Psalms of Lament Writing Exercise

The book of Psalms contains some of the most beautiful, haunting, and sometimes disturbing prayers in the Christian tradition.

The Psalms consist of many types of prayers, including prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of praise, and prayers of lament. This exercise will focus on the prayers of lament or complaint, as this is the type of prayer Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night that he was betrayed.

Many of the Psalms are intensely personal, revealing much about the pray-er and the God to whom the prayers are addressed. Take a few moments to read through some of the following Psalms of personal lament:

3, 4, 5, 7, 9-10, 13, 14, 17, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 36, 39, 40:12-17, 41, 42-43, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 64, 69, 70, 71, 77, 86, 89, 120, 139, 141, 142.

Choose one of the Psalms that you feel drawn to, and borrowing some of the lan-guage or spirit of the Psalm, rewrite it in your own words. Use this rewrite to enter a time of prayer. Don’t be afraid to be personal, vulnerable, and honest in your Psalm.

5. PRAYER

Psalm 126 (NLT)

_A song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem._

When the Lord brought back his exiles to Jerusalem, it was like a dream! We were filled with laughter, and we sang for joy. And the other nations said, “What amazing things the Lord has done for them.” Yes, the Lord has done amazing things for us! What joy!

Restore our fortunes, Lord, as streams renew the desert. Those who plant in tears will harvest with shouts of joy. They weep as they go to plant their seed, but they sing as they return with the harvest.

6. SONG

Kyrie

see appendix
1. OPENING PRAYER

by Stephen M. Fearing

God of the cross,
For us, sinners though we are, you were nailed to a cross.
For us, you took a final breath, and walked willingly into the darkness.
For us, you were broken.
For us, you lived.
For us, you died.
You do not deserve this death.
We do not deserve your life.

God of grace,
Give our hearts courage to accept your grace
and to respond to the life that was given for all.
Guide us through the darkness ahead
that we might be renewed by the light that is to come.
It the name of the Blessed One who was taken and broken, we pray. Amen.

2. SONG

What Wondrous Love Is This?
see appendix for melody

1. What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul?
What wondrous love is this, O my soul?
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
To simply be the way of your love, of your love.

2. As you have shown the way, let us love, let us love,
As you have shown the way, let us love;
As you have shown the way, so teach us every day
To simply be the way of your love, of your love.

3. As instruments of peace, may we grow, may we grow,
As instruments of peace to bring the bound release,
And make oppression cease, help us grow, help us grow,
To make oppression cease, help us grow.

4. O let us hear your call to be love, to be love,
O let us hear your call to be love;
O let us hear your call, great servant of us all,
To be the least of all, as your love, as your love,
To be the least of all, as your love.

3. SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 53:7-9 (NIV)

7 He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
8 By oppression[a] and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.[b]
9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.


23 Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse him, saying, “We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king.”

3 So Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“You have said so,” Jesus replied.

4 Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”

5 But they insisted, “He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here.”

6 On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. 7 When he learned that Je-
sus was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

8 When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. 9 He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. 10 The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. 11 Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. 12 That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies.

13 Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, 14 and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. 15 Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. 16 Therefore, I will punish him and then release him.”

18 But the whole crowd shouted, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!” 19 (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.)

20 Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. 21 But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

22 For the third time he spoke to them: “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him.”

23 But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. 24 So Pilate decided to grant their demand. 25 He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

The Crucifixion of Jesus
26 As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. 27 A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. 28 Jesus turned and said to them, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ 30 Then they will say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!”’ (Hosea 10:8)

31 For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

32 Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. 33 When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. 34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

35 The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”

36 The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar 37 and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”

38 There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the jews.

39 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

40 But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? 41 We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

43 Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

4. SPIRITUAL PRACTICE + REFLECTION

Artistic Imagination
“Creativity is the heart of holiness.”
- John O’Donohue

Whether you have never in your life picked up a paint brush, or you are an accomplished artist of some sort, praying through artistic expression and creativity can be a meaningful (though often difficult and frustrating) practice. The following list contains the passages and steps of “The Way of the Cross.” Read through one or all of the following passages and express your reflections creatively by painting, drawing, writing poetry, writing a song, or whatever other way you choose.

2. Jesus Is Arrested (Matthew 26:47-56)
3. Sanhedrin Tries Jesus (Mark 14:61-64)
4. Pilate Tries Jesus (John 18:33-37)
5. Pilate Sentences Jesus (Mark 15:6-15)
6. Jesus Wears Crown (John 19:5)
7. Jesus Carries His Cross (John 10:17-18)
12. Jesus Speaks to Mary and John (John 19:25b-27)

5. PRAYER

adapted from Celtic Daily Prayer by the Northumbria Community

Lord, when You were misunderstood, You silently forgave;
    but we so often respond in anger.
    Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.

Lord, You gave us the opportunity to choose Jesus,
    but for so long we have chosen the rebellion
    that demanded your death.
    Lord, have mercy, Lord have mercy.

You loved, and won rejection and pain—
    but you still loved.
May we be open to You, and to each other.
May we be open to You, and to each other.

5. SONG

Kyrie

see appendix
1. OPENING PRAYER

by Stephen M. Fearing

God of the tomb,
your Son has entrusted his life to you
in the moment when all is dark
and hope seems nothing but a memory.
The body that was broken has been buried
and the song that we had sung is now silent.

God of love,
When death seems to have the final word, give us courage.
When hope seems to be buried, give us endurance.
When stones seal us from the light, give us love.
Above all, give us the trust
that now is the only companion for your Son
in that lonely tomb.

In the name of the One whose death will give us life, we pray. Amen.

2. SONG

What Wondrous Love Is This?
see appendix for melody

1. What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul?
What wondrous love is this, O my soul?
What wondrous love is this that cause the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul?

2. And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on.
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be;
And through eternity, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;
And through eternity, I'll sing on.

3. SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 53:10-12 (NIV)

10 Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.
11 After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.
12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Luke 23:44-56 (NIV)

44 It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, 45 for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. 46 Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last.

47 The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, “Surely this was a righteous man.” 48 When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. 49 But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

The Burial of Jesus

50 Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, 51 who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. 52 Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. 54 It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

55 The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the
tomb and how his body was laid in it. 56 Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

4. SPIRITUAL PRACTICE + REFLECTION

Silence

The Spiritual Practice of Silence is a vastly undervalued practice in our time. When was the last time you had even five minutes of silence? I don’t know about you, but I have a hard time recalling. And aren’t there other “holier” things we need to be doing rather than just sitting in solitude and quiet? Silence can also be a bit scary. What might we hear if we slow down and remain undistracted for a period of time?

The Saturday of Holy Week is defined by a sense of heart-wrenching silence. Saturday is the day of grief that lingers between the violence of the Cross on Friday and the jubilation of Easter Sunday. Spend some time today, whether it’s 5 minutes or an hour, just sitting in silence. Find a place that is quiet, distraction-free, and comfortable. Pay attention to when your mind wanders. Pay attention to the point at which the silence becomes scary or boring or feels uncomfortable. Allow this short period of silence to lead you into the rest of the prayers and songs for the day.

6. SONG

Kyrie

see appendix

The story continues Wednesday, April 3, 2013

asacredjourney.net

If you enjoyed this guide, sign up at asacredjourney.net/subscribe to receive updates and other free offerings
What Wondrous Love Is This

Kyrie (2007)

RESOURCES

Celtic Daily Prayer by The Northumbria Community
Book of Common Prayer, the Anglican Communion
Cardiphonia.org
Liturgylink.net
The Liturgical Year Joan Chittister

Special thanks to:
Stephen M. Fearing (@stephennfearing) for contributing the opening prayers
Bruce Benedict of @Cardiphonia for permission to use the Kyrie sheet music

Image Sources
Click section title for image source–
Maundy Thursday
Good Friday
Holy Saturday