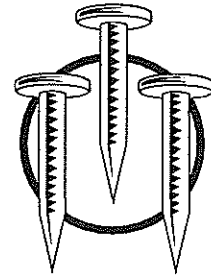
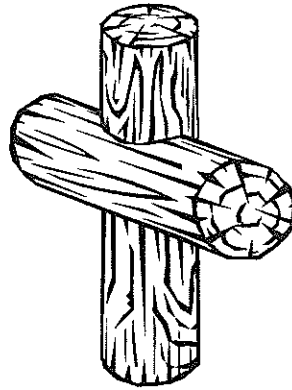
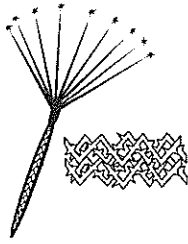


Good Friday



Suggested service of Prayer and Word

for use of Families at home or in small groups.

SETTING THE SCENE AS REALISTICALLY AS POSSIBLE

[This time around only two 'aids' are needed - a lighted candle, and a crucifix.]

[The Leader may wish to share the following thoughts - if judged necessary some points may be more simply explained to the younger ones present.]

One of Benedict XVI's Encyclical Letters open with the words *God is love* [1 John 4:16]. He goes on to say that "*these words express with remarkable clarity the heart of the Christian faith.Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life to a new horizon and a decisive direction.*" Pope Francis quotes these lines in his very first encyclical which was entitled The Joy of the Gospel. Each and every true human encounter with Jesus, even on Good Friday should be a joyful one.

We must recognise that faith is NOT a simple idea but its basis must be sought in a PERSONAL ENCOUNTER with Jesus of Nazareth. All the Gospel records should make this obvious. However, it is the events celebrated as a reminder of the very first Good Friday that provide each one of us with an opportunity to move away from bare historical facts, ideas and theory and experience an ENCOUNTER with the God-man Jesus of Nazareth.

LEADER: In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen!

LEADER: Let us pray.

Almighty God and Father,
we thank you with all our hearts
that on the cross Jesus
became one with us in our sin,
so that we might, despite that sin,
share the life of your kingdom.

Empower us to be truly grateful,
and to live not as unforgiven sinners,
despairing in our own weakness,
but, rather, to live as your forgiven sons and daughters,
rejoicing in your power to save, cleanse, and give life:
to the glory of your great and holy name.
We ask this through Christ our Lord:

ALL: AMEN!

LEADER: We need to know clearly
who IS this PERSON
with whom we seek a PERSONAL ENCOUNTER.

We listen to a reading from the Letter to the Hebrews.
[4: 14 - 16. 5: 7 - 9]

READER: [Proclaim the reading prayerfully and clearly.]

ALL: Glory and praise to you, O Christ!
Christ was humbler yet,
even to accepting death, death on a cross.
But God raised him high
and gave him the name which is above all names.
Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

[Reading of the Passion - JOHN 18: 1 - 19: 42. Where possible a few different people could take turns in proclaiming this Gospel. It should be read carefully and clearly. After the words *and bowing his head he gave up the spirit* a significant period of silence should be observed before the reading of the closing verses. Afterwards it would be useful if the group recalls the different people recorded in the reading who had personal encounters with Jesus.]

LEADER: On this most holy day
let us be confident in the Lord's promise
of his great love.
So, in full trust, we place our prayers before him.

[If preferred, different members could each read a petition - a short period of silence should be observed after each intercession.]

1. We pray for Pope Francis, our bishops Wilfrid and Abel, the priests and leaders and workers of our Parish - that Christ our shepherd may keep them in health and safety, strengthen and guide them.
2. We pray for our own family, our friends and neighbours, for all those who reach out to us in service, love and loyalty - may we all live in peace and unity, and show, by our love for each other, that we are God's sons and daughters.
3. We pray for our president, for all who govern us, and the leaders of all nations - that the Spirit may guide them in their work.
4. We pray for all who are stricken by the Corona virus, for those who selflessly care for them in any and all ways - that the Lord will hold them in the palm of his hand.
5. We pray for the needy of our world, those lost and confused, for refugees, those sick, in anguish and fearful, the hungry and lonely - that the Lord will guard, strengthen them in their adversities, and give them an awareness of his presence.
6. We pray for all who do not yet believe in Jesus Christ - may the Spirit open their eyes and ears so that they may begin to seek a personal encounter with the living God.

LEADER: Father, we place before you the needs of our world
and the needs of our hearts.
We trust that you will be
faithful to your promises to us,
the covenant signed by the blood of your Son.
Bless us, Father, in our doubts and in our faith,
now and forever and ever:

ALL: AMEN!

LEADER: Come, let us now worship and bow down,
let us bend our knees before the Lord,
for he made us
and bought life for us by his blood.

We are his people, and he is our God.

[Lifting the crucifix high]

Behold the wood of the cross
on which is hung the Saviour of the world;
come, let us adore.

[Now, in silence, the Crucifix is passed to each member of the house. One by one, the cross may be kissed. As each one passes the cross he / she proclaims *Behold the wood of the cross*. **THIS RITUAL MUST ONLY BE PERFORMED IF EVERYONE PRESENT IS ACTUALLY LIVING TOGETHER DURING LOCKDOWN. NO EXCEPTIONS.**]

LEADER: Father, our hearts are touched as we focus our gaze
on the death of your Son.
Our sadness gives way to joy,
as we accept that death
has yielded the promise of new life.
In this lies our hope:
Jesus Christ has risen from the dead,
and summons all who would follow him
to a life of joyful expectation.
May we who have walked with him in his hour of sorrow
share in his glory and victory
now and forever and ever:

ALL: AMEN!

LEADER: Let us go forth now in peace,
confident that the Lord is with us
until all things are fulfilled,
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: AMEN!.

