

## Candle Liturgy for Good Friday

*Six purple Candles are lit before the service begins, as well as a Christ Candle. Through the liturgy the candles are extinguished, symbolizing the moment of darkness of Jesus' death on the cross. This liturgy can be used as written or interspersed with hymns, and prayers. This is meant to be used, re-imagined, copied and shared as you will.*

### **Candle of Temptation:**

Mark 14: 10-11

10 Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them.

11 When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

One: We reflect on the temptations of this world which test our obedience to God. Like Jesus, we are faced with the reality of making choices. Jesus could have chosen wealth and power; he could have been a king like his ancestor David. Instead he chose to be a servant king.

**All: We think of the pressures upon our lives to choose popularity, wealth, comfort, power, like Judas, and we ask for the courage to make choices that Jesus would have us make.**

One: We extinguish the first candle as we think of those times we have been drawn away from God. Every time we give in to temptation, we diminish the light of God in our world.

*Candle is extinguished*

**All: God of grace and forgiveness, strengthen and encourage us as we face life's temptations. Help us to take time to think and pray, times to be quiet with you as we make the choice of faithful discipleship.**

### **Candle of Fear**

Mark 14: 26-31

26 When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

27 And Jesus said to them, 'You will all become deserters; for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."

28 But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.'

29 Peter said to him, 'Even though all become deserters, I will not.'

30 Jesus said to him, 'Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.'

31 But he said vehemently, 'Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And all of them said the same.

**One:** We reflect on the how difficult it is to face the truth. We think of the disciples who made a difficult choice to leave everything behind and journey with Jesus, based on their faith alone. Yet when faced with Jesus' prediction of their unfaithfulness their faith gave way to the fear of accepting the truth.

**All: Like Jesus, you call us to name our fears and to face them, knowing you are ever present with us.**

**One:** We extinguish this candle remembering that Jesus chose danger and suffering despite his fears.

*Candle is extinguished*

**All: God of strength and patience, we confess that there are times we have made safe choices, rather than risk your call to serve. Help us to focus ourselves and put our trust in you. May your constant love be with us as we confront our fear, and put our hope in you.**

### **Candle of Abandonment**

Reading: Mark 14: 43-50

43 Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.

44 Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.'

45 So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him.

46 Then they laid hands on him and arrested him.

47 But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

48 Then Jesus said to them, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit?

49 Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.'

50 All of them deserted him and fled.

**One:** We reflect on the despair Jesus must have felt when his followers abandoned him after Judas betrayal. Jesus faced his trial and sentencing with only God by his side. Remind us of the times we have had to face challenges alone,

when we too, have called out to God to be with us.

**All: In our hearts we know that God will never leave us alone.**

One: We extinguish this candle recalling the abandonment of Jesus in the hour of his greatest need, and the strength it must have taken for Jesus to face such persecution on his own.

*Candle is extinguished*

**All: Loving God, we ask you to be with us and strengthen us with you life giving power that we may serve you faithfully on our journey.**

### **Candle of Despair**

One: We reflect on the ways that our human nature causes us to embrace self-protection rather than the truth.

**All: Like Peter, we know that when the truth of denial comes to rest on our hears, our heart is filled with despair.**

One: We extinguish this candle recognizing the times of despair in our lives.

*Candle is extinguished*

**All: God of grace and mercy, even when we stray, you are there. Surround us with love and forgiveness as we take the next step.**

### **Candle of Confusion**

#### **Mark 15: 1-5**

- 1 As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate.
- 2 Pilate asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' He answered him, 'You say so.'
- 3 Then the chief priests accused him of many things.
- 4 Pilate asked him again, 'Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.'
- 5 But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

One: We reflect on the questions asked to which there seems no answer. Like Pilate, there are times that we look for the logical reasons to do the unthinkable.

**All: We are but human, and we need true understanding of Jesus' teachings.**

One: We extinguish this candle for the times there are no easy answers, just hard questions.

*Candle is extinguished*

**All: Grant us Patience, God, as we follow your Son to the cross. Patience for**

**the answers that will one day be ours.**

### **Candle of Grief**

Mark 15: 16-20

- 16 Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters\*); and they called together the whole cohort.
- 17 And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him.
- 18 And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'
- 19 They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him.
- 20 After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

One: We reflect upon the feelings that Jesus' followers must have faced on that dreadful day as they followed him to the cross and watched him suffer and die.

**All: We recall our own times of grief and try to understand how they felt - Mary, Peter, James & John, and the others.**

One: We extinguish this candle for our own grief and the grief of generations who accept the death of Christ on the cross.

*Candle is extinguished*

**All: We lift our grief to your, O God, and ask for your compassion and solace. As we remember the story of Jesus' death, help us to be present in this moment.**

### **Christ Candle:**

One: Today is the darkest day of the year. Today we remember all the unloving actions which try to blot out God's light:

**All: And like the disciples, face our broken promises, disobedience, lack of trust, fear and wavering commitment. Today we experience the darkness of Christ's death, and the separation between God and humanity portrayed in that death.**

*Christ Candle is extinguished.*

One: It is finished. Jesus has completed his life on earth.

*(The congregation is invited to leave in silence as quiet music is played in the background)*