

LENT HOUSE GROUPS 2026

PALM SUNDAY

SESSION 6: My time is near



“For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.”
- Psalm 36:9

Enter the Sacred Space (5 minutes)

The leader invites all to enter into a prayerful presence to the Holy Spirit, whose guidance we seek during our time together. During this prayerful silence, we give thanks for the opportunity of this time together, for the presence and gift of each other and ask for the grace of the Spirit to flow unimpeded during the session. All pray in silence for all, that each may receive light and healing

Pray and Share (15 minutes)

Leader: We gather in the name of the Father:

Who sent his beloved Son into the world not to condemn it but to save it.

Leader: We gather in the name of the Son:

Who promises that all who believe in him shall have eternal life.

Leader: We gather in the name of the Spirit:

Love of the Father and the Son made known in supreme sacrifice: the laying down of divine life so that humanity can be restored to its destiny of everlasting life.

In a period of calm and a space of trust, each one of us is invited to share briefly one thing that has happened in the past week or your hopes for the week ahead. It could be one thing that has given you cause for concern, something shared during the last time you met as a group or something that has given you cause to celebrate.

In this moment of peace and fellowship, we pray for the good of the group. Each member is invited to offer up any personal intentions. We also pray for the good of the Church, for wisdom in our country and for the common good. Let us also bring to mind the poor, the sick and those who have died. We join together in praying:

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen

Spiritual Reading and Contemplation (15 minutes)

What follows is the practice of spiritual reading and journaling that we can choose to generously share with each other. Each week includes a scripture passage, a poem and a picture. Read through the materials once as a group and then each person reflects on the material in silence.

Scripture Reading

Matthew 27:11-54

At that time: Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate, the governor, and the governor asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus said, 'You have said so.' But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, 'Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?' But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgement seat, his wife sent word to him, 'Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.' Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' And they said, 'Barabbas.' Pilate said to them, 'Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let him be crucified!' And he said, 'Why? What evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!'

So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' And all the people answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the

charge against him, which read, 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, 'You who would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, "I am the Son of God." ' And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, 'This man is calling Elijah.' And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.' And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, 'Truly this was the Son of God!'

Poem

The Agony in the Garden – John O'Donohue

Whatever veil of mercy shrouds the dark
Wound that stops weeping in no one, cannot
Stop the torrent of night when it buries thought
And heart beneath the black tears of the earth.

Through scragged bush the moon discovers his face,
Dazed inside the sound of Gethsemane,
Subsiding under the weight of silence
That entombs the cry of his terrified prayer.

What light could endure the dark he entered?
The void that turns the mind into a ruin
Haunted by the tattered screeching of birds
Who nest deep in hunger that mocks all care.

Still he somehow stands in that nothingness;
Raising the chalice of kindness to bless.

Picture

Ecce Homo – Titian



Potential Discussion Topics

- Are there times in your life when you have felt alone and abandoned by others?
- Looking back, can you see where God was during those times?
- Where might you be being asked to give your life for others?
- What are your hopes for Holy Week this year?

Journal Notes

Optionally use this space to record your thoughts during your time of reflection

Conversation and Sharing (15 minutes)

Each person is invited to briefly share any thought or insight related to the materials that came to them during their time of reflection. This could be in the form of a simple phrase, a prayer that came to mind, an image or any other insight. It is also permissible to simply respond with silence and no one is obliged to speak.

Conclusion (5 minutes)

The leader can optionally summarise the main insights that have been shared and the meeting concludes with prayer:

Heavenly Father, as we have gathered in the warmth of this house, we thank you for this season of Lent. A time of prayer, fasting, almsgiving and reflecting on your suffering, death and resurrection. We ask you to use this time to draw us closer to your heart in deeper union with you and each other. May the lessons we learn transform us into your disciples, ready to carry your light into a world in need. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen