

MON 29 MARCH

Isaiah 42:1-9
Psalm 36:5-11
Hebrews 9:11-15
John 12:1-11

TUE 30 MARCH

Isaiah 49:1-7
Psalm 71:1-14
[or 71:1-8]
1 Corinthians 1:18-31
John 12:20-36

WED 31 MARCH

Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 70
Hebrews 12:1-3
John 13:21-32

THU 1 APRIL

Maundy Thursday
Exodus 12:1-4
[5-10] 11:1-4
Psalm 116:1. 10-end
[or 116:9-end]
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-17. 31b-35

FRI 2 APRIL

Good Friday
Isaiah 52:13 – end of 53
Psalm 22 [or 22:1-11
or 22:1-21]
Hebrews 10:16-25 or
Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9
John 18:1 – end of 19

SAT 3 APRIL

Job 14:1-14 or
Lamentations
3:1-9. 19-24
Psalm 31:1-4.
15-16 [or 31:1-5]
1 Peter 4:1-8
Matthew 27:57-end
or John 19:38-end

REFLECTION

Holy Week's significance necessitates three daily eucharistic readings, including passages from Isaiah concerning God's suffering servant who, despite being despised, rejected and tortured, will deal gently and compassionately with all who have fallen away. He will persevere in building God's kingdom, opening the eyes of those who are blind, bringing out prisoners, being an agent for a harmonious new creation that supersedes the divided old one. Texts from New Testament letters identify Christ as divinely appointed to fulfil that costly but ultimately triumphant servant role.

Meanwhile, in the Gospel of John, the authorities' hostility increases and Judas switches sides. This brings us to Maundy Thursday, which opens by recalling God's saving act of Passover in Exodus. This inaugurates the ritual meal that Jesus recalibrates in the Last Supper. By washing the disciples' feet, Jesus exemplifies his vision of leadership as servanthood which, on Good Friday, he carries through to its ultimate end. Holy Saturday, the only day when there is no eucharistic provision, provides a moment of stillness, both empty and pregnant. The Gospel readings remind us that Christ is dead, entombed; but Lamentations offers hope in the Lord's unceasing, steadfast love. Christ's story, our story, is not finished.

PRAYER

Loving Lord Jesus,
through your servanthood
our pride, obstinacy and selfishness are sundered;
that humbly, compassionately, generously,
we might grow in loving service to you and to one another.
By your wounds you broke open every tomb, every prison.
May the light of your love eternally flood every corner of creation.

Jesus Washing the Feet of the Apostle Peter at the Last Supper. Cathedral of Our Lady of Amiens, France. jorisvo / Shutterstock.com



HOLY PLACES

PART I – IONA

Heather Smith visits some holy sites and reflects on their significance.

Some places seem naturally holy. We often describe them as thin places, where heaven and earth seem very close – so close you could almost step straight through. These are the kinds of places that the founders of Christianity in this country chose to make their home. And they are places where modern pilgrims find their faith is deepened.

Iona is such a place. Reaching it involves a trip north west from Glasgow through the beautiful scenery and twisting roads of Argyll until you reach Oban. From there you take a ferry across to the island of Mull, but you have further to go. The ferry to Iona, off the south west coast of Mull, leaves from Fionnphort, a glorious thirty-five-mile drive from Craignure where the Oban ferry docks. It feels as if you are leaving the world behind as each stage of the journey takes you further west, to more remote places. At Fionnphort the final leaving-behind requires you to leave your car and take the ferry on foot.

Tradition tells us that the monastery on Iona was founded in AD 563 by Columba, who came to Iona having been exiled from Ireland. St Aidan lived here until he answered a call from King Oswald of Northumbria to bring Christianity to his kingdom and set off for Lindisfarne. Iona was a centre of Celtic Christianity and it is thought that the Book of Kells, an illuminated Gospel book, was begun here in the eighth century.

Iona Abbey, in a dramatic position overlooking the sea, was built around 1200 and outside is an impressive ninth-century Celtic cross, St Martin's Cross. The burial ground on the island is the resting place of many early kings of Scotland, including Macbeth.

The Iona Community, an ecumenical Christian community, was founded by George MacLeod in 1936 and you can join them for week-long events. You might feel inspired to become a member of the community yourself. It is a dispersed one, and welcomes members in various categories who want to share its life.



Iona Abbey

LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by Caroline Hodgson and Heather Smith



Holy Week

Monday 29 March to Saturday 3 April 2021

WEEK