

Poured Out: Elements of a Resurrection

It was the week that changed the world. It was a week of things poured out for us. Yes, God's love poured out for us. But as we read the scriptural accounts of this week, we encounter some very tangible elements poured out that will offer us a glimpse into the drama of that week.

How it Works:

Below are six brief meditations and ritual actions for you to experience at home. You can do so alone, with family, or with neighbors. If you are using this with family or neighbors, have someone different read the monologue and scripture. Beginning on Monday and thru Holy Saturday, there is a ritual for each day. You are encouraged to find a small table, tray table, shelf, or space that you can designate as your "worship space." With each daily ritual another item will be added to your worship space until Easter Sunday. You will need access to the following items but feel free to be creative if you don't have a specific item.

- A small bowl with a dollop of scented oil or cooking oil.
- A basin or bowl with water and washcloth or paper towel.
- A cup of grape juice (or wine, or any juice) and roll/small piece of bread
- A strip of red cloth or anything red.
- Eyedrops or Visine.
- A small candle

**You may close each daily ritual with a prayer or a verse of the hymn
"Were You There"**

***Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?***

OIL - Holy Monday (needed: small dab of oil)

Read Scripture: John 12:1-11

Mary, friend of Jesus:

I was in the middle of the marketplace that day and it hit me like an overwhelming wave of feeling... I loved him so much. It was a love beyond anything I'd ever known. Not romantic, not like a sibling, certainly like family but he was so much more to me... he was teacher, he was priest, he was wise one, he was hope itself.

And for the first time, in those days before the Terrible Thing happened, I felt he might not be invincible. He had told us, he had warned us, he had been saying this could happen all along but I just couldn't imagine it. He was so *eternal*, it seemed. Like nothing, not even God, would *dare* to take him away from any of us. But the tension was building. I will beg him, I thought, to not go to Jerusalem—just go back to Galilee. Go to the hills. Go to Nazareth, go *anywhere* but Jerusalem right now. But even as I thought it to myself, I knew that he wouldn't go. This is where he was supposed to be. With all these people gathered for Passover *Jerusalem* is where he had to be. And I knew he might never leave.

I suddenly became aware that I was still standing stock-still, oblivious to all around me here in this marketplace and as I began to double over with fear. But just as I did my eyes came to rest on the stall to my right. A jar, a most beautiful jar of anointing oil. The seller offered it to me for a price that seemed outrageous and I didn't care. No price could compare with the price I now had a sudden feeling that my teacher, my master, would pay. And so I bought it. Whether in life or in death, my beloved friend would need it.

Ritual Action:

Mary's anointing of Jesus belonged to the tradition of honoring someone with sweet-smelling oil made of a combination of many herbs. This was used at the investiture of royalty and also as anointing for burial. In this one act, Mary offers signs of love and honor. The early Christians then used this same scented oil as part of their baptismal and confirmation rites to emphasize their new identity with Christ (which also means "anointed one").

Dipping your finger into the oil, anoint your forehead (or the head of someone else), with a sign of the cross and the words, "You are God's Beloved Child."

Close with prayer OR "Were you There"

WATER - Holy Tuesday (needed: bowl with water and washcloth)

Read Scripture: John 13:3-8; 12-16

Simon Peter, disciple of Jesus.

He continually baffled me. My whole time with him-one surprise after another. Jesus turned my world upside-down. Especially when it came to relationships. We would worry about who was his "right-hand man" and he always would turn it around with his "last-shall-be-first" stories. I wanted to know where I stood with him. I needed for him to be my Lord, my Master, my Teacher. And he was. But then he went and did *this [indicates the bowl of water and towel]* that night.

Now, none of us were of really high lineage, but we weren't slaves or servants. I mean at the meal that night were people to wait on us - the service just comes with any good room rented out for a meal. But *I* was going to wash his feet that night. I was overwhelmed with love for him and fear for his life. I had this nagging need to show him, demonstrate to him, that I would do anything for him. But before I could even go there... he knelt before *me*. He insisted on washing *my* feet. I was horrified. I thought maybe he was losing his mind. Another reversal of the order of my world. He just kept doing that.

"You can't be part of the family of God, the kin-dom of God, Peter, if you don't let me do this." If I couldn't see that he really meant what he said about serving our neighbors, our friends and our enemies, I just wasn't getting it. I had to surrender all my preconceived ideas about how relationships are, how they go, who we love. I had to surrender and let his loving act of washing my feet heal my soul and heal every disappointing relationship I'd ever had. This was the kin-dom, the family. This was what it was all about.

Ritual action:

Throughout biblical history, water was a sign of God's presence and help. Jesus, the Teacher, uses it to wash the feet of his disciples before that Last Supper to model love.

Dip your hand (or your neighbors) in the bowl of water and carefully dry them.

Close with prayer OR "Were you There"

WINE - Holy Wednesday (needed: juice and roll or piece of bread)

Read Scripture: John 13: 21-30

Judas, disciple and betrayer of Jesus

I was so angry with him! Why wouldn't he fight? We had so many followers by this time and so many were in Jerusalem right now. Why did he insist on this "blessed are the meek" stuff?! I think all along I had hoped that this was the revolution. That we would finally stand up to the Roman occupiers. And he had such power and charisma. Couldn't he have done *anything*? This "Son of God?"

I suppose I finally just got so bitter. I had kept it all inside for some time and it had started to boil and rage until I just snapped. If I couldn't get my revolution, I could get out. I was tired of holding the purse for this motley group of people who gave it away as soon as it came in. And then I discovered I could get out with some money from those dirty Romans... It all happened so fast. They approached me. They had seen me, watched me, perhaps read my indecision, my anger, my separation at times from the group. And it just happened.

And then there I was at the table, *his* table. Knowing what I had set into motion. All of a sudden I was flooded with panic as we all sat here with the air heavy with fear and unknowing. At the table, again. It reminded me of all the meals in our years together. Sometimes just us, this small band of disciples, but often with someone Jesus had invited to dinner... someone we couldn't believe, yet again, he was hanging out with. People that took advantage of others, those who were against us, those who questioned him, people who were beneath him, really, he invited to the table! The bottom-feeders... *[he stops, suddenly aware of what he is saying]* And then I realized as he stretched out the cup of wine to me and dipped the bread in it, *[he picks up the cup]* and named me as betrayer... that he was doing it once again... only this time it was me. He was offering to share the cup and break the bread with despicable me. No matter who we are or what we've done, he always invites us. Mercy really was his true nature and I realized that love really was the biggest weapon of change. He would never have hurt anyone. He loved us all, even the lowest of the low... *[he hangs his head]*

Ritual Action:

By your spirit we are one with Christ, whose presence was real to his disciples and is real to us even now. By this spirit we are one with each other. Let this love be seen in us outside of this place.

Lift the bread and cup. Take a piece of bread and serve your neighbor or dip your bread in the cup and eat.

Close with prayer OR "Were you There"

BLOOD - Holy Thursday (needed: small strip of red cloth)

Read Scripture: Luke 23: 1-43

Roman centurion, executioner of Jesus

The scene was horrifying. Not that I wasn't used to crucifixions. They were the favored way of putting prisoners to death by the Romans and so I'd assisted many times. But I'd heard about this man, Jesus. We thought Barabas was going to be on this cross but the crowds had become almost out of control and I'd heard that Pilate simply washed his hands of it-sent this one to die just to shut them up. Who knows what these crowds really were screaming about, there was so much confusion and rumor, no one will probably ever know the truth is what I think.

But when the reality hit his followers that Jesus was really going to die and they saw him heading to Golgatha with the cross, the horror really began. Even the heavens seem to be wailing as storms began to appear. It gave me a chill. But it is always easier protecting others than protecting yourself... from the mothers who beg for mercy for their sons, from those who insist on waiting the hours and even days it takes to die this agonizing death. Being a soldier can't always protect you from what you witness first hand. Like hearing Jesus talk to the prisoners on the other two crosses next to him... the promise that death is not the end for them. And then he looked at me. Right at me and he spoke the words I'll hear for the rest of my life and the words that mean I can no longer do this anymore... "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Later, after he died, they pierced him in his side. I still don't understand why but in that moment I knew that he was truly the Son of God. His blood was poured out just like the love he poured out for his people. The blood flowed from his side. The blood flowed. The love flowed..

Ritual action:

In a culture of retributive justice, someone has to pay. It is difficult to face the element of blood poured out on the cross just as it is difficult for us to name and claim and lament the injustices-the blood spilled-in violent ways still today.

Drape the red strip of cloth over your hand. Feel the texture between your fingers before allowing it to fall back to the table.

(If you have a black cloth cover your table or worship space with it this evening)

Close with prayer OR "Were you There"

TEARS - Good Friday (needed: eyedrops). *As an alternative, you can drip drops of water to the floor from your bowl

Scripture: John 19: 25-30

Mary, mother of Jesus.

My son. From the moment the angel said to me, "you will bear a son" my life was no longer my own. And yet it was every bit mine. Moments treasured, remembered in my heart alone. Every moment he grew within me. Every day of his youth. Every movement of his ministry from that day at Cana to this very minute. At times the pain threatened to outweigh the wonder of this unimaginable life God had given me.

And especially now. Know that in this moment I am not just the mother of Jesus shedding tears for my son. I am the tears of any mother who has seen their child die before them. I am the tears of every mother who has lost children in political warfare and oppression. I am the tears of all loved ones who cannot save their loved ones as they starve, are ravaged by disease or injury, are swept away by tsunami or flood earthquake or hurricane, lose their lives to addiction, are consumed by depression or suffer violent ends. And I am the tears of all loved ones who do not know the fate of the missing ones... I am the tears.

Ritual action:

Salt was used in the ancient world for preservation and healing and thus became an element in rituals of covenant-making and healing as well. The salty tears cried by those closest to Jesus are part of the connection we all have to loving deeply.

Use eyedrops to carefully moisten one or both of your eyes.

Close with prayer OR "Were you There"

LIGHT - Holy Saturday (needed: small candle/votive)

Read Scripture: Mark 15: 42 - 16:3

Salome, follower of Jesus.

It was time to go tend to him. We had waited, waited, waited, in the agonizing depth of Sabbath-keeping stillness bearing our grief like black cloaks. I had shut out the light of day between the moment of death and this moment of moving back out into the world that seemed so cruelly-violent to us now. I had snuffed out my lamp, vowing to light it no more so that my heart did not have to see the future lurking before me.

But it was time. Tending to his body would perhaps help me find comfort in the darkness, there in the tomb with the memory of him even in his lifeless body. I knew how to tend to the dead. I would let my movements carry me into a future I was afraid I could not face.

And so I did light the lamp in the early-morning just before dawn. And we made our way... My biggest concern was who was gonna get us into the tomb?

Ritual action:

The element of light is essential to life and hope. From the beginning of the creation story to the light that shined continuously, guiding the liberation of the Hebrews, to the light to which Jesus himself witnessed often in his ministry, this symbol becomes the most powerful element of resurrection.

Light your candle. Dim or turn off the lights in your room for a moment and allow the glow of your candle to fill the space for as long as you like before turning your lights up and extinguishing your candle.

Close with prayer OR "Were you There"