

Daily reflections for Holy Week

Based on seven paintings by Nebiyu Assefa

Introduction

These striking pictures by Ethiopian artist Nebiyu Assefa tell the story of Jesus' Passion in a bold and colourful way, and we offer them as a resource to help people of all ages engage with Jesus' journey to the cross and beyond.

With each picture is its related Bible reference, prompts to help you study the picture, a meditation or reflection, and suggestions for prayer.

1 Do as I have done

Jesus washes the disciples' feet.

Based on John 13.1-15



Look Jesus washes his disciples' feet to show them that no one is more important than anyone else.

Reflect Are you prepared to be the least important person, or do you always want to be best? How will you show others that you love them as Jesus loves you?

Pray for those who feel that they have no voice or standing in society; that you will have the opportunity to show love and respect to others; that those with power and authority will use it to bring justice and peace. Thank God for showing us how to treat one another.

2 Remember me

Jesus breaks bread with his friends.

Based on Luke 22.14-20



Look Jesus says, 'Do this to remember me.' He holds up bread and wine. 'This is my body – given for you. This cup is the new covenant – poured out for you.'

Reflect Jesus offers us bread and wine to help us remember his love for us. Will you remember? What will you remember?

Pray for those who do not know the love of God for them; for those who have sad memories and want to forget; that they/we will remember how much God loves us. Give thanks that God never forgets us.

3 Get up and pray

Jesus is alone in the garden.

Based on Luke 22.39-46



Look Jesus asks the disciples to pray while he himself goes off alone. He is distressed. He knows he will die. In the darkness, he prays to his Father to save him; but then says, 'not my will but yours be done'. Jesus comes back – the disciples are asleep. He challenges them: 'Get up and pray.'

Reflect Can you feel the emotions in this image? Can you pray in times of distress?

Pray for those who are distressed or frightened and feel there is no hope; for those who are alone; for those who are trying to pray and find it difficult.

Give thanks that we can pray to God at all times, and we will be heard.

4 I do not know him

Jesus' disciples deny knowing him.

Based on Luke 22.54-62



Look Peter follows Jesus and those who have arrested him into the high priest's house. Peter is recognised – he's a disciple. But he denies it. The cock crows and Jesus looks at Peter.

Reflect In the picture, which person is Peter? Why does he lie? How does he feel after Jesus looks at him? What would you have done?

Pray for all who are persecuted or bullied because of what they believe; for all Christians to have the courage to witness to their faith; for all people who feel they have done something wrong. Give thanks that when we make mistakes or deny God, he forgives us.

5 Women are wailing

Jesus carries his cross to the place of execution.

Based on Luke 23.26-27



Look Jesus is hurt from the whippings he's had. The cross is heavy. They make Simon carry it. This is your Lord they are taking away.

Reflect Imagine that you are among the crowd, watching Jesus; watching Simon as he is forced to carry Jesus' cross. This is the one who you thought would save the world. He is going to die.

Pray for those who are sad and mourn; for those who are unjustly accused; for those who are cruel and hurt others. Thank God for the power of Jesus' death and resurrection.

6 Immersed in death

Jesus is crucified; he is dead. He is taken down from the cross.

Based on Luke 23.44-56



Look Jesus is dead. Joseph of Arimathea is ready to wrap him in a linen cloth. Mary and John are crying. You can see the wounds on Jesus' feet and hands and side.

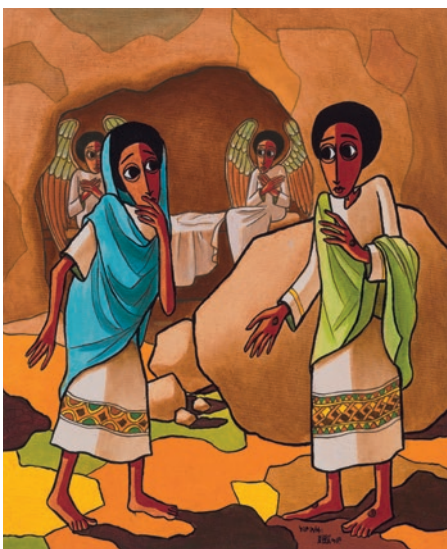
Reflect Darkness has come on all the land: darkness in our hearts, in our minds. Jesus is dead: we do not understand – he is dead. How do you feel? How do you want to react?

Pray for people who are threatened with death as punishment; for those who care for the sick and dying; for those who organise and lead funeral services, and care for the bereaved. Give thanks for God's love for us.

7 I have seen the Lord

The women discover the tomb is empty. He is risen!

Based on John 20.11-18



Look Mary is outside the tomb, crying. She sees two angels. 'Why are you weeping?' 'They have taken my Lord.' Mary sees the gardener. 'Why are you weeping?' 'Tell me where he is.' Jesus calls her by her name, 'Mary.' Mary recognises him, 'Teacher!' He says, 'Go and tell.' Mary runs, 'I have seen the Lord!'

Reflect If you had been with Mary in the garden, what would you have done?

Pray for those who are sad and troubled today; for those who have good news to share; for all Christians that they will share the good news of Jesus. Thank God for the whole Easter story – and that Jesus rose from the dead.

Artist Nebiyu Assefa's paintings feature in Joanna Brown's book *Jesus* (jzartpress.com). These resources were written by Pauline Godfrey.