



Good Friday

guide to a contemplative walk






introduction

Walking on Good Friday is a traditional way to reflect on the story of the cross. As Jesus journeyed through his final days, so we journey in our contemplation.

This guide includes scriptures to read, questions for reflection, prayers, and spiritual practices.





plan your walk

- Plan to take your walk alone or invite others to join you. This guide is appropriate for people at any place in their spiritual journey.
 - Choose a walk you're comfortable taking, at a distance and pace that works for you. You'll pause for reflection seven times: once at the beginning, five times during your walk, and once at the end.
 - Decide how you will structure your walk. You can plan where you will stop ahead of time, stop based on time (for example, every five minutes), or stop when it feels right.
 - If you'll walk with others, decide if you will take turns reading the scriptures and prayers, or if one person will lead and if you will respond to the reflection questions aloud or consider in silence.
-

as you begin

Stop 0





read

Some know lots about this story, others know little. With each reading, there will be thoughts and questions that come up within us. We can ask out loud what our questions and observations are, or keep them in our hearts.

We begin by setting an intention and choosing to become present.

reflect

What is your intention for your Good Friday walk today?





pray

God of mystery and wonder,
because we know the ending of the story,
it's tempting to ignore the darkness of this day.
It's tempting to go about our business as usual.
It's tempting for us to move too quickly
to the dawn of light on Easter morning.

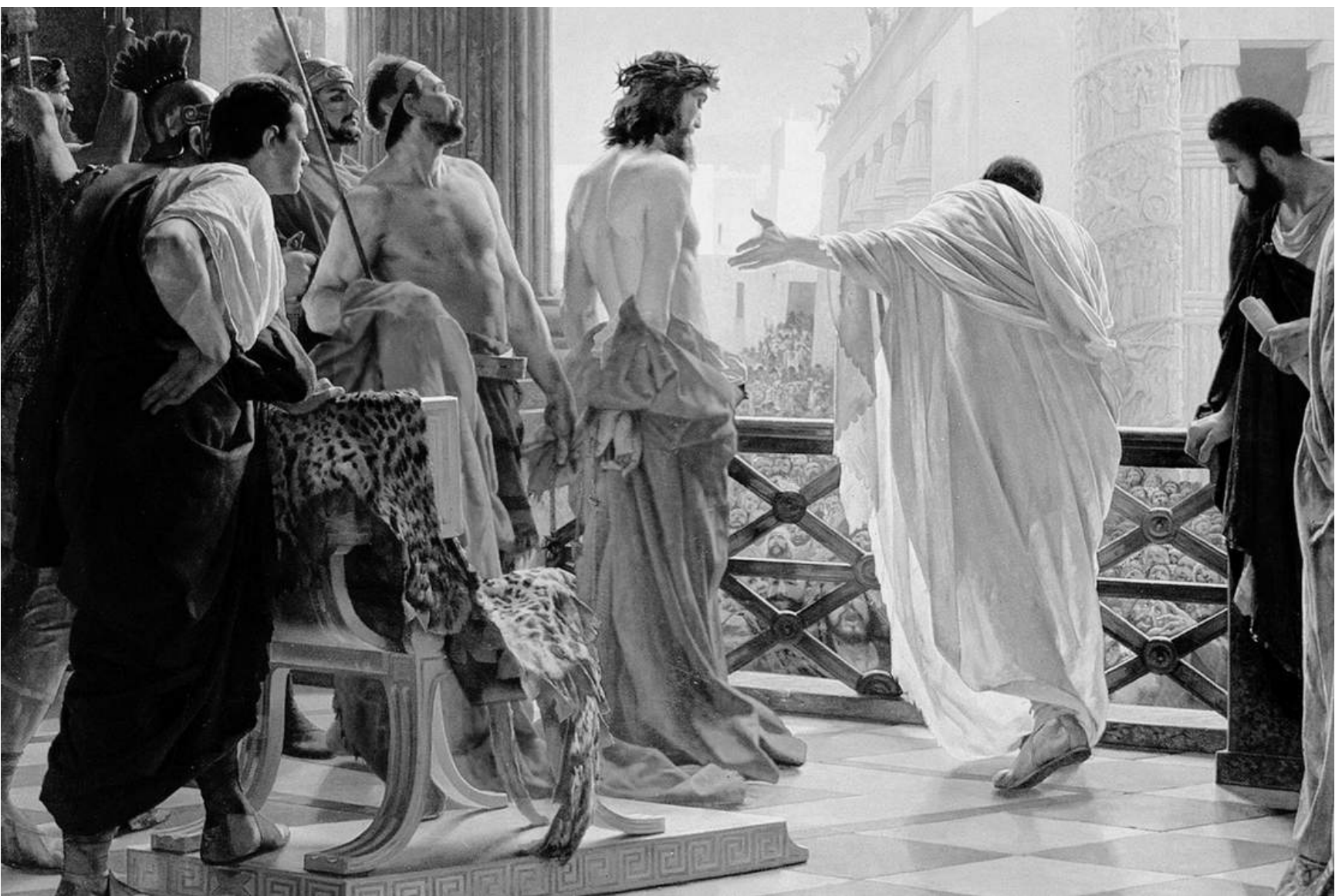
But give us courage and strength on this day
to live for a while in the darkness,
to set aside comfort and pleasure,
to feel the darkness
in which so many of your children dwell,
the darkness into which your son Jesus entered.

God of Light, God of Shadow, in our time together,
keep us aware of your presence in the darkness,
help us to see meaning in this terrible story,
and keep the fire of hope alive in our hearts.

the first stop:

Jesus is Condemned to Death

Stop 1





read

...they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning... Pilate asked "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say I am a king, For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate said "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" But they said "Not this man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a bandit. The Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged... (John 18, NLT)

reflect

What truth do you need to listen to today?





pray

God of the accused and the accusing,
who made the mouths, the ears and hearts
of all in conflict.

May we turn ourselves towards
that which must be heard,
because there we will hear your voice.
Amen.

the second stop:

Jesus Carries his Cross

Stop 2





read

...so Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted "Crucify him!" ... Then he handed him over to be crucified. So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.

reflect

If you can, find a piece of wood - like a twig - to hold as you reflect.

What burdens do you need help to carry?

What burdens can you help others carry?





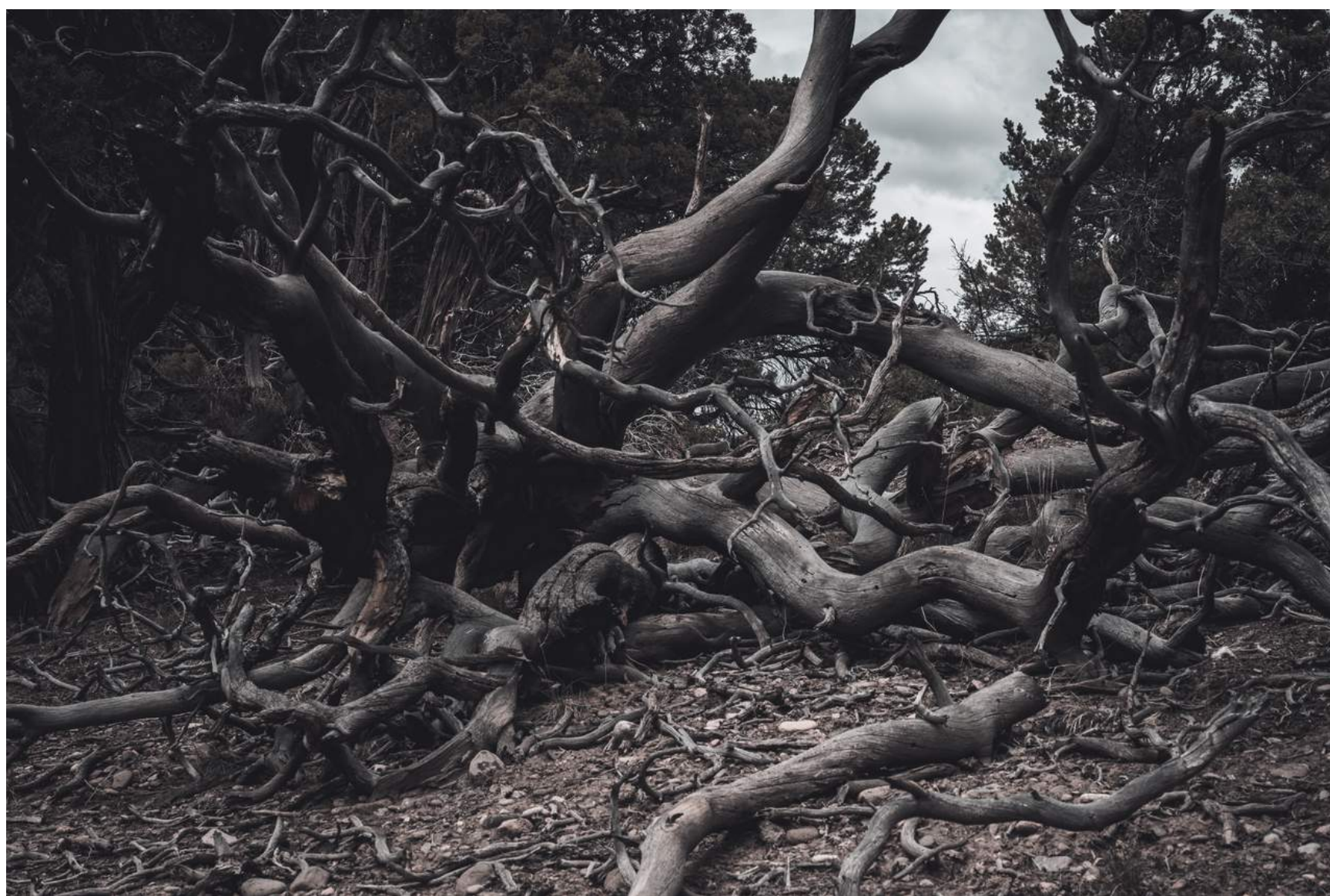
pray

Burdened God,
who bore the weight of wood
on torn shoulders,
We pray for the torn
and the burdened,
that they may be held together by
guts and goodness.
Because you were held together
by guts and goodness. Amen.

the third stop:

Jesus Falls

Stop 3





read

Tradition tells us Jesus fell three times as he carried his cross.

Pause here for a period of silence.

reflect

What does it mean to you that Jesus
fell?





pray

God of the Fall,
You felt the fall
when your body fell to the ground.
Gather all who fall.
Gather all our fallings.
Gather the voices.
Gather the breath that's
forced from our bodies.
Because falling, too,
has a story.
Amen.

the fourth stop:

Jesus is Crucified

Stop 4





read

There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews"... The soldiers took his tunic and said "Let's cast lots for it to see who will get it."... Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene (who Jesus named "The Tower")... ...when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said, "I am thirsty," A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

reflect

In what way do we feel lonely and forsaken?

In what ways do we feel misunderstood?





pray

Jesus of the imagination,
you never grew old, always a young man,
and most of us grow older than you did.
When lives are cut short
the living question the meaning of living.
May we live with meaning
even when the meaning fades,
making meaning
so that we
have something to live for.
Amen

Keep silence until the next stop.

the fifth stop:

Jesus is Placed into a Tomb

Stop 5





read

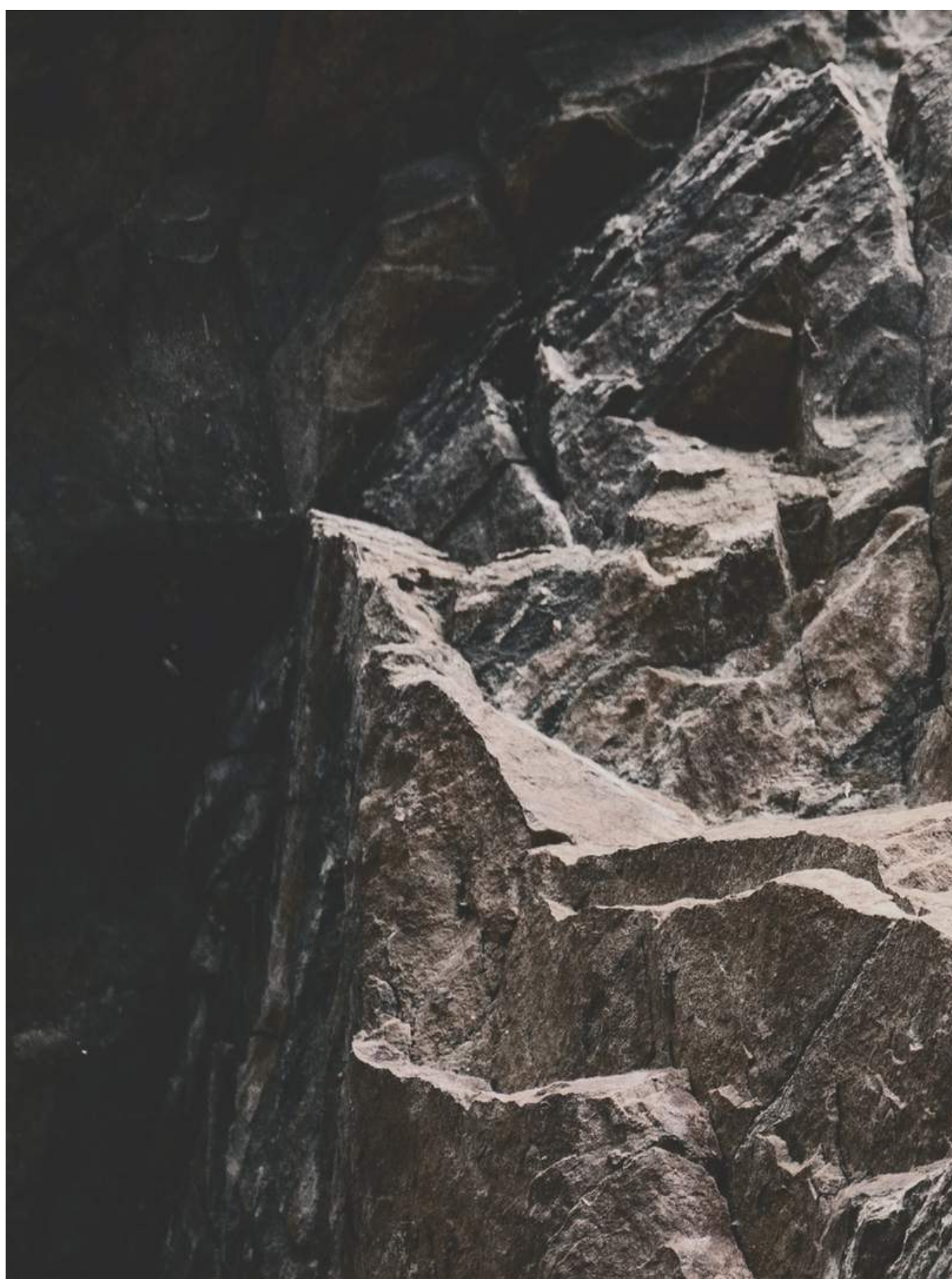
Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

reflect

If possible, find a rock from your walk today.

Feel it in your hand. What do you notice?

Is there something in your life that feels final, but perhaps is not?

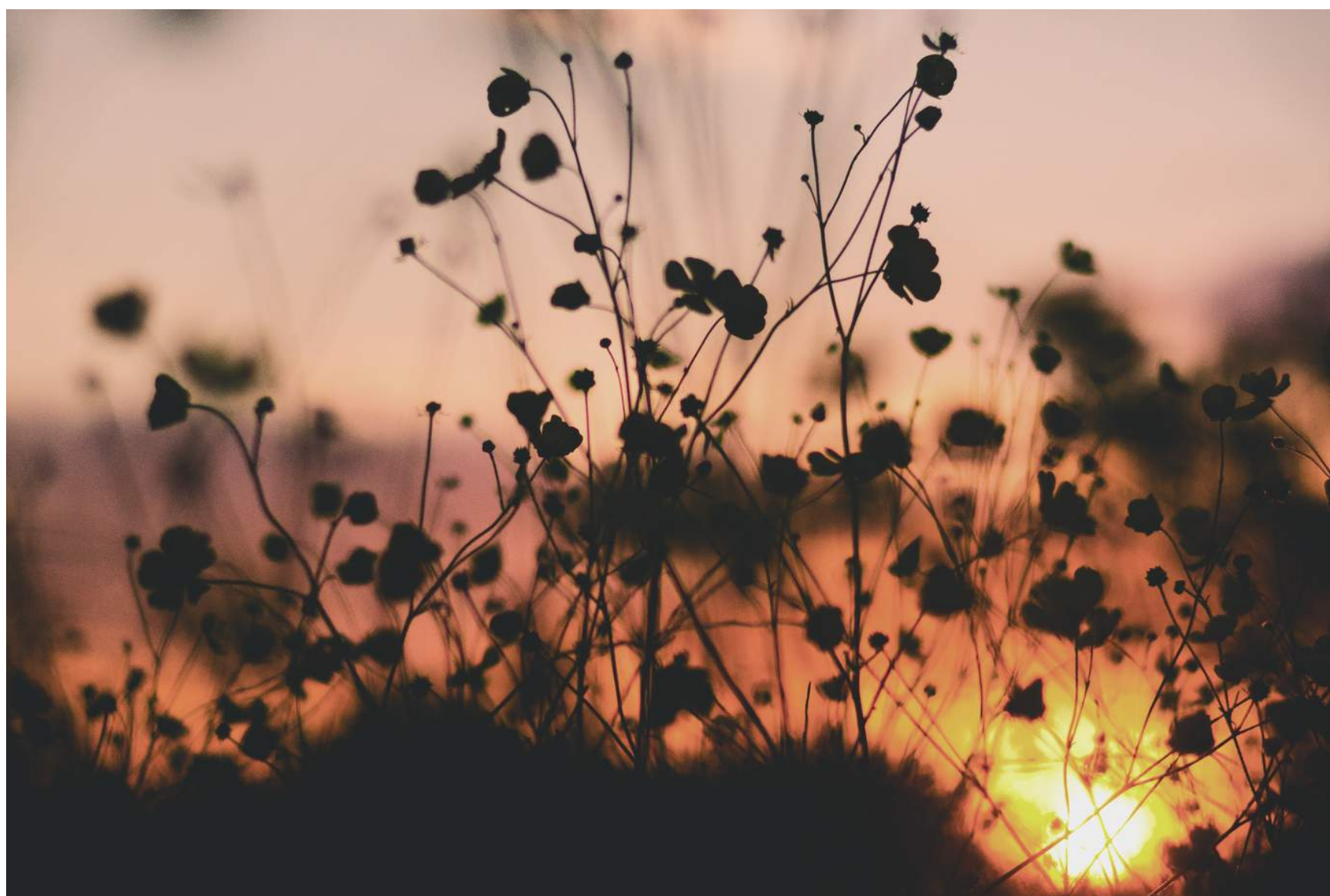




pray

Lord, you are wounded,
no longer divided
between inside and out,
knowing in your flesh and soul
the deadly violence that kills what it fears.
Take us this day with you
through the narrow gate from which
an endless river of life flows,
lead us through our own wounds,
from our own fear and darkness into
courage, love, forgiveness of ourselves and
others,
into your light and resurrection life.
May we walk with you this day
within the passionate heart of God

as you end





read

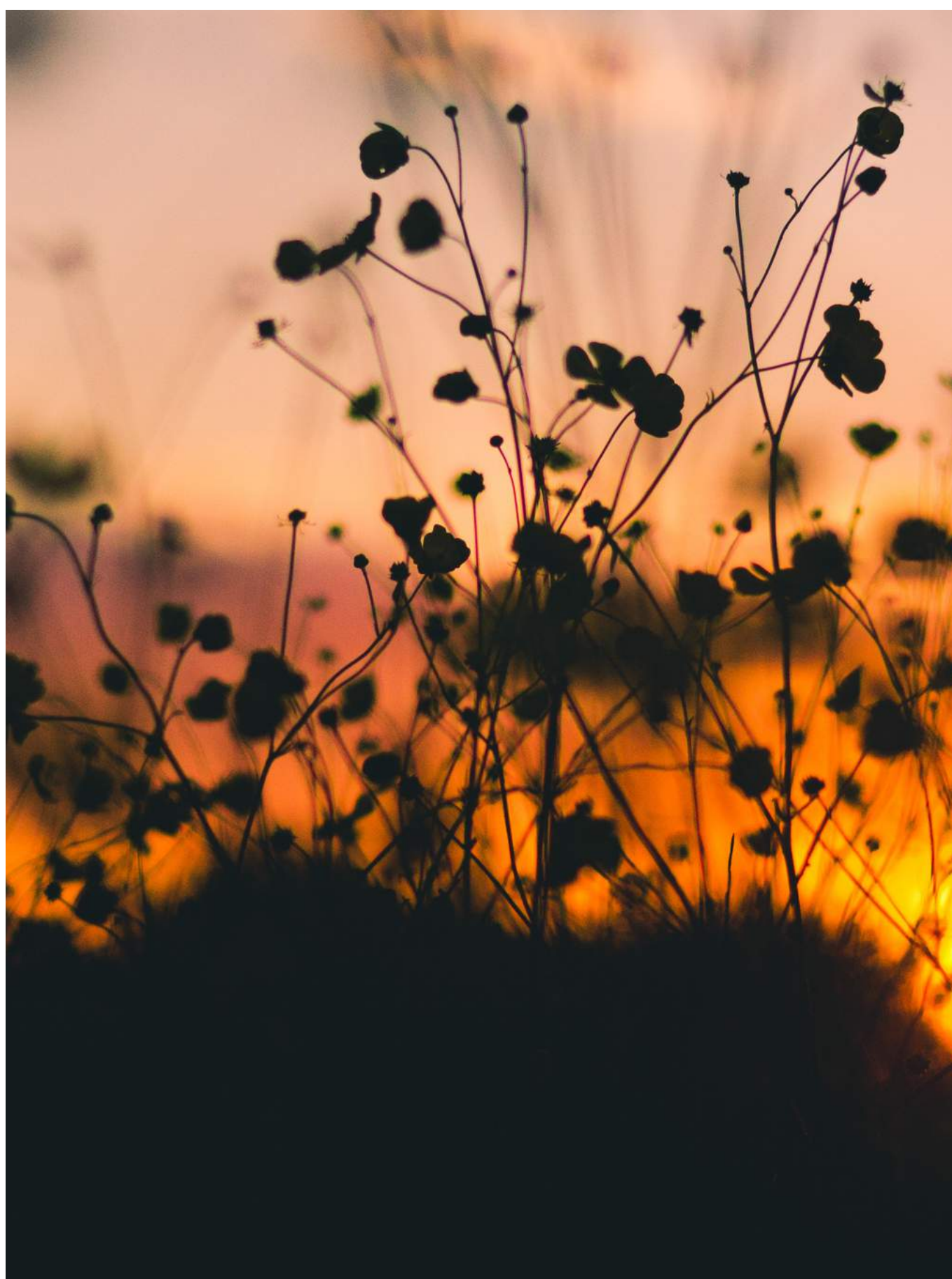
As the sun sets on Good Friday, we enter a time of waiting. We wait for the dawn, when the light of Christ will rise again. If this space is uncomfortable, so be it. We know that the darkness cannot last, and that the light will always overcome. So we wait, and we pray, and we hope with great anticipation for the dawn of resurrection.

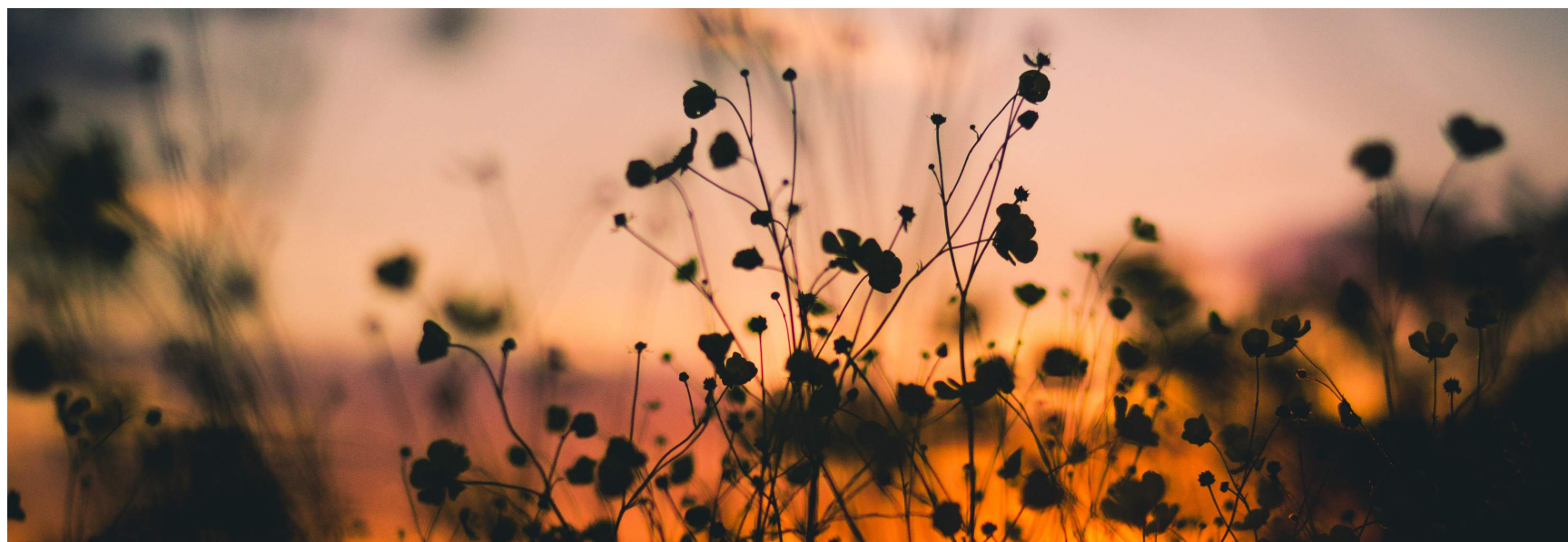
reflect

What do you want to carry from this walk?

What do you want to leave here?

What do you hope for, as you wait for new life?





pray

The sun sets on this day of darkness,
When the world was turned upside down.
The light of Christ was extinguished,
And all hope seemed lost.

But even in the darkness,
There is a flicker of light.
The hope of new life is still alive,
And the promise of resurrection is sure.

So we pray on this Good Friday,
That you would be with us in the darkness.
Give us strength to carry on,
And hope to believe in the light.

Amen



conclusion

Thank you for walking with us today. Join us online or in-person for Easter Sunday at 11 AM.

For more information about The Orchard, visit theorchardcommunity.com

Prayers for stops 1-5 were written by Padraig O'Tuama.

