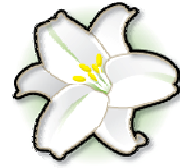


## Voices from the Past

Adapted from the *Ladies' Quarterly Program*,  
Canada & Bermuda Territory  
April-June, 1968 edition



This is a service of meditation. The women can do the singing, or a soloist can be brought in for the occasion.

**Setting:** The platform arranged as an Eastern room, and those who do not have the speaking parts can be dressed in Eastern garb. OR—a backdrop scene of Jerusalem, with ferns and lilies.

**Song:** *My Jesus I love Thee*

**Leader:** Today, for a little while, we will listen to “Voices from the Past” as they tell us of that first Good Friday, and the events leading up to it; of the suffering and death of Jesus – of His resurrection. And as these voices carry us back through the ages, may our hearts re-echo what our voices have sung in verse 2 of *My Jesus I love Thee*.

**Reader:** (Maybe a voice off stage or one- in costume- who sits quietly in the background of the presentation, rising for each portion. A good voice is essential if the words are to be meaningful). Reader will announce:

**The Triumphant Entry Into Jerusalem** — then read Matthew 21: 8-11

**Miriam** (enters quickly and quietly as the reading reaches its conclusion, and speaks to the congregation):

“I am Miriam, daughter of Jairus. My parents have often told me of the day when I slipped away from them, into a land of shadows. In their sorrow, Jesus came—He spoke to me, and brought me back. I remember looking into His face, and a peace came into my heart that has remained with me ever since. Do you wonder that I love Him? But I came here, not to talk to myself, but to tell of His entry into Jerusalem.

It was a lovely morning in Spring— Father and I were approaching Jerusalem. From the time I was quite a little girl, we had talked of the time when we, as a family, would go up for the Passover, and here we were, actually on our way to the Holy City. The winding path led us to the top of the Mount of Olives— and I caught my first glimpse of the lovely old city. I beheld the glory of the Temple. Then there came to us the sound of many voices, and we saw a great multitude waving palm branches—doing honor to someone who sat upon the back of a gentle beast of burden. It was Jesus, and as we joined the throng, we too, with grateful and happy hearts, lifted our voices and shouted “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

**Solo:** *The Holy City (2 verses)*

Reader will announce:

**The Cleansing of the Temple**—then read Matthew 21: 12-17

**Martha** (enters and speaks):

“It may be, you have heard of me; I lived in Bethany with Lazarus my brother, and our younger sister, Mary. We were such a happy family, and never happier than when guests came to share our home. The most joyous hours of all were those when the Master, turning aside from His busy life, joined our family circle. He seldom mentioned His own troubles, but He did speak of the Temple—His Father’s house, erected for the purpose of worship to God, where people might come to receive guidance and be at peace with God. Instead, it had been turned into a place of commerce. The humble and earnest worshippers who had come from afar found themselves cheated, both in the buying of animals and doves for the sacrifice, and in the changing of their money. Jesus had been watching these humble people, and one could see the yearning of His heart over them. We saw too, the anger in His eyes as He looked at the money changers. Finally, He could stand it no longer, and taking a scourge in His hand, He upset the tables and drove out from the sacred Temple—the Temple of God—those who had made it a den of thieves.”

**Song or Solo:**            *I Would Be Thy Holy Temple* (verse 1 and 4)

Reader will announce:

**The Last Supper**—then read Matthew 26: 17-19

**Rachel** (enters and speaks):

“I am Rachel, and I live next door to John—the disciple whom Jesus loved. It was John, who in later days, told us of the Last Supper; of the Master, girding Himself with a towel and washing the feet of the disciples. “Such humility and thoughtfulness made them ashamed of their own lack of thought,” John said.

A frightening hush came over the assembly when Jesus mentioned that one of their number would be His betrayer. Each man in turn searched his own heart, seeking for some trace of weakness that would lead him, in a moment of testing, to betray His Lord. Jesus also spoke of Peter’s denial of Him, and as the disciples all looked at Peter, the Master continued, “*This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.*” (Matt. 26: 31 NIV)

Scarce knowing what it all meant, and feeling sorely puzzled, they arose and followed Him into the gathering gloom—followed Him to the Garden.”

**Congregational Song** (sung softly):            *Break Thou the Bread of Life*

Reader will announce:

**Christ in the Garden**—then read Matthew 26: 36-45

**Zillah** (enters as reading comes to a close):

“Zillah is my name. I too was a follower of the Nazarene, and from the lips of the disciples, I heard the story of the Garden.

The night was calm and beautiful as they wended their way to the Garden of Gethsemane. The friendly trees seemed to welcome them into this place of quietness. Some of the disciples were asked by Jesus to wait; then He, with Peter, James and John went on a little farther. But even these three who were so close to Him, could not accompany Him all the way to the place of prayer. He had to be alone. He was entering upon the kind of experience that one must face alone. The moonlight streamed down upon His upturned face as He prayed for strength to face the ordeal that would so soon confront Him. Perhaps in the quietness there, He could, even then, hear the cry ‘Crucify Him!’ It may be that He felt something of the pressure of the thorns, the pain of the nails, the heartbreak of dying for the sins of the world. And so He knelt—alone.

The disciples were weary, and not knowing what this night would bring to them of testing—they slept. Three times Jesus turned to the place of prayer, then awakening them, and bidding them to follow, He turned His face toward the approaching mob and—CALVARY.”

**Vocal Selection:**     *It Was Alone the Savior Prayed*

Reader will announce:

**The Crucifixion**—then read Matthew 27: 45-50

**Mary** (enters and sitting down, speaks):

“How proud I was when men spoke of me as ‘Mary, the mother of Jesus,’ and it is of Him—my Son—I would tell you. Looking back, I know now that He tried to prepare me for that awful hour, but mother-like, I dismissed the thought that anything terrible could happen to Him. Like one held in a fearful dream, I stood helpless as the trial in Pilate’s Hall proceeded. I witnessed the mocking, the spitting and the scourging, and thought my heart would break. Stumbling through the darkness, I followed—to Calvary—saw Him raised on a Cross, heard Him speak words of comfort to a thief who hung beside Him, listened to Him commit me to the care of John the Beloved and then through the long hours we watched Him suffer. When He prayed that God would forgive His tormentors—and with a loud cry bowed His head and died—I knew the meaning of the words of Simeon, spoken so many years before: “*This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.*” (Luke 2: 34-35 NIV). This was Calvary, the place of Crucifixion.”

**Song:**            *There is a Green Hill Far Away*

Reader will announce:

**The Resurrection**— then read Matthew 28: 1-7

**Mary Magdalene** (enters, walks slowly to the stage and then turning to face the audience):

“Mary Magdalene, I am named, and in Holy Writ they refer to me as ‘the one who loved much’ because, you see, I was ‘much forgiven’; but that is another story—perhaps some day I will tell it to you.

The Sabbath was ended, and in the early dawn of another day, we—Mary the mother of Jesus, and myself—made our way to the place where Jesus lay. The birds were singing—just as though there had been no Calvary. The air was filled with the fragrance of spring flowers. Our hearts were filled with a strange sense of foreboding as we walked in silence. Can you imagine then, what we felt, as nearing the sepulcher in Joseph’s garden, we beheld the heavy stone rolled away, and in the entrance of the tomb there appeared an angel, arrayed in shimmering white. Seeing our fear, he hastened to assure us that the night of terror had gone—that this was Resurrection morning.

*“He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him.”* (Matt. 28: 6-7 NIV)

The sudden joy seemed almost too much to bear, but turning, we started off to do the angel’s bidding, when we noticed our pathway blocked by an approaching figure. It was Jesus, calm, serene—the light of Victory shining in His eyes.

The lonely vigil in the Garden, the cruel trial, the Crucifixion—all these were forgotten, and there He stood before us in Resurrection Glory!

Kneeling before Him we worshipped—then at His bidding, sped away to spread abroad the tidings, and to send echoing down through the ages, the words first spoken to us— *“Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”* (Matt. 28: 20 NIV)

**Period of Consecration**—while group sings softly:            *Sweet Spirit of Christ*

**Closing Prayer**