



GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 18

Let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

—*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 280

Ask any Episcopalian for a favorite prayer in *The Book of Common Prayer*, and many of us will turn to this one. It appears several times: on Good Friday, during the Great Vigil of Easter, just before the renewal of baptismal vows and during ordinations. Its poetry—and its vision—are captivating. They are also undeniably risky.

O God, please look out for your church—not our church, but yours. Let the whole world see and know; in other words, the life of the church is a public life, dedicated to becoming a witness to the activity and purpose of the living God. And what is God doing? What is this plan of salvation? God is raising up things that have been cast down. God is renewing all that has become old and encrusted. God is wrapping arms of love around all of creation, through the incarnate One, Jesus Christ, and through his body, the church.

I am glad we pray this prayer so often. In the desolation of Good Friday, it gives us a reason to hope. In the darkness of an Easter Vigil, we can see light on the horizon. Every time we say “I will” in baptism or ordination, this prayer reminds us just what mission we are signing on for. We see Christ, arms stretched wide to embrace and renew a world. We see our own arms, extensions of his, lifting and renewing. It’s risky. It’s worth it.

—Stephanie Spellers