

A Service of Prayer, Poetry, Word, and Meditation

For Good Friday



O Sacred Head (community choir recording)

Welcome and Introduction

Opening Prayers

Eternal God, in the cross of Jesus
we see the cost of sin
and the depth of your love:
in humble hope and fear may we place at his feet
all that we have and all that we are,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ,
Who was lifted up on the cross
That you might enlighten the world that lay in darkness.
Gather us today to your holy cross,
That meditating with penitence upon your great sacrifice for us,
we may be loosed from all our sins;
and entering into the mystery of your passion
we may be crucified to the vain pomp and power of this passing world;
and finding our glory in the cross alone, we may enter your eternal glory
where you, the Lamb that was slain,
reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit
One God, now and forever. Amen

The Coming - RS Thomas

And God held in his hand
A small globe. Look he said.
The son looked. Far off,

As through water, he saw
A scorched land of fierce
Colour. The light burned
There; crusted buildings
Cast their shadows: a bright
Serpent, A river
Uncoiled itself, radiant
With slime.

On a bare
Hill a bare tree saddened
The sky. many People
Held out their thin arms
To it, as though waiting
For a vanished April
To return to its crossed
Boughs. The son watched
Them. Let me go there, he said.

Isaiah 52.13 - 53.end

See, my servant shall prosper;
he shall be exalted and lifted up,
and shall be very high.
Just as there were many who were astonished at him
—so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance,
and his form beyond that of mortals—
so he shall startle many nations;
kings shall shut their mouths because of him;
for that which had not been told them they shall see,
and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.
Who has believed what we have heard?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;
and as one from whom others hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him of no account.
Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.
He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
Who could have imagined his future?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.
They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb with the rich,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.
Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain.
When you make his life an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;
through him the will of the LORD shall prosper.
Out of his anguish he shall see light;
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.
The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out himself to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

On Pain – Khalil Gibran (from The Prophet)

And a woman spoke, saying, "Tell us of Pain."

And he said:

Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.

Even as the stone of the fruit must break, that its heart may stand in the sun, so must you know pain.

And could you keep your heart in wonder at the daily miracles of your life, your pain would not seem less wondrous than your joy;

And you would accept the seasons of your heart, even as you have always accepted the seasons that pass over your fields.

And you would watch with serenity through the winters of your grief.

Much of your pain is self-chosen.

It is the bitter potion by which the physician within you heals your sick self.

Therefore trust the physician, and drink his remedy in silence and tranquillity:

For his hand, though heavy and hard, is guided by the tender hand of the Unseen,

And the cup he brings, though it burn your lips, has been fashioned of the clay which the Potter has moistened with His own sacred tears.

Mark 15. 1-20

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' He answered him, 'You say so.' Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, 'Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.' But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, 'Do you want me to release for you the

King of the Jews?’ For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, ‘Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?’ They shouted back, ‘Crucify him!’ Pilate asked them, ‘Why, what evil has he done?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Crucify him!’ So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him

There is A Green Hill Far Away (Community Choir recording)

The Killing – Edwin Muir

That was the day they killed the Son of God
On a squat hill-top by Jerusalem.
Zion was bare, her children from their maze
Sucked by the dream of curiosity
Clean through the gates. The very halt and blind
Had somehow got themselves up to the hill.
After the ceremonial preparation,
The scourging, nailing, nailing against the wood,
Erection of the main-trees with their burden,
While from the hill rose an orchestral wailing,
They were there at last, high up in the soft spring day.
We watched the writhings, heard the moanings, saw
The three heads turning on their separate axles
Like broken wheels left spinning. Round his head
Was loosely bound a crown of plaited thorn
That hurt at random, stinging temple and brow
As the pain swung into its envious circle.
In front the wreath was gathered in a knot
That as he gazed looked like the last stump left
Of a death-wounded deer's great antlers. Some

Who came to stare grew silent as they looked,
Indignant or sorry. But the hardened old
And the hard-hearted young, although at odds
From the first morning, cursed him with one curse,
Having prayed for a Rabbi or an armed Messiah
And found the Son of God. What use to them
Was a God or a Son of God? Of what avail
For purposes such as theirs? Beside the cross-foot,
Alone, four women stood and did not move
All day. The sun revolved, the shadows wheeled,
The evening fell. His head lay on his breast,
But in his breast they watched his heart move on
By itself alone, accomplishing its journey.
Their taunts grew louder, sharpened by the knowledge
That he was walking in the park of death,
Far from their rage. Yet all grew stale at last,
Spite, curiosity, envy, hate itself.
They waited only for death and death was slow
And came so quietly they scarce could mark it.
They were angry then with death and death's deceit.

I was a stranger, could not read these people
Or this outlandish deity. Did a God
Indeed in dying cross my life that day
By chance, he on his road and I on mine?

Psalm 22.1-17

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
and are so far from my cry and from the words of my distress?
O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer;
by night as well, but I find no rest.
Yet you are the Holy One,
enthroned upon the praises of Israel.
Our forefathers put their trust in you;
they trusted, and you delivered them.
They cried out to you and were delivered;
they trusted in you and were not put to shame.

But as for me, I am a worm and no man
scorned by all and despised by the people.
All who see me laugh me to scorn;
they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,
"He trusted in the Lord; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, if he delights in him. "
Yet you are he who took me out of the womb,
and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.
I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born;
you were my God when I was still in my mother's womb.
Be not far from me, for trouble is near,
and there is none to help.
Many young bulls encircle me;
strong bulls of Bashan surround me.
They open wide their jaws at me,
like a ravening and a roaring lion.
I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint;
my heart within my breast is melting wax.
My mouth is dried out like a potsherd; my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;
and you have laid me in the dust of the grave.
Packs of dogs close me in, and gangs of evildoers circle around me;
they pierce my hands and my feet; I can count all my bones.
They stare and gloat over me;
they divide my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing.

Myopia (John 19:25-27) - Annelies Zijderveld

In an instant a child can disappear
Instead of walking with you, he's just not there.
Steps get retraced back from where
You came and find him turning over questions
with teachers, surprised by concern,
Didn't you know I would be in my Father's house?
Who reproves a child making sense
of father from Father- you take his words to heart.

After some years, your boy becomes
a man selecting the right companions. Who is it
that draws to him people like a bucket
of water pulling from a well? A crowd gathers

curious, you round up your boys
who mutter, *He must be out of his mind*, and
try to take charge, still not getting
what season he is now entering. Instead of access
you hear him ask, *Who are my mother
and brothers*, you see him motioning to the crowd,
continuing to assert his godliness in
declaring those obedient, mother and brothers.

Who knew the road would lead here:
a hill, a cross, a crown. You watch as they drive nails
into the hands you used to hold as he
learned how to walk – hands that learned his father’s
trade – hands that knew how to save
water and turn it into wine. You’ve always taken
his words to heart, not comprehending
this day would come. And even if your boy wanted
none of this would be undone.
Your God, your son looks on you weeping and loves
You, utters, *Dear woman behold your son*,
as he motions to his friend and to him, *Here is your mother*.
Taking care of those he cherishes because
He knows how this ends, that it is near, soon to dawn
It is finished as the rest of the story begins.

Psalm 13 (Community Choir Recording)

Mark 15.21-32

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take

It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, ‘The King of the Jews.’ And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, ‘Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!’ In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes,

were also mocking him among themselves and saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.' Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

Jesus is nailed to the cross – Malcolm Guite

See, as they strip the robe from off his back
And spread his arms and nail them to the cross,
The dark nails pierce him and the sky turns black,
And love is firmly fastened onto loss.
But here a pure change happens. On this tree
Loss becomes gain, death opens into birth.
Here wounding heals and fastening makes free
Earth breathes in heaven, heaven roots in earth.
And here we see the length, the breadth, the height
Where love and hatred meet and love stays true
Where sin meets grace and darkness turns to light
We see what love can bear and be and do,
And here our saviour calls us to his side
His love is free, his arms are open wide.

The Litany of Penitence

Let us kneel at the foot of the cross in penitence.

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

Lord, have mercy.

We have been deaf to your call to serve, as Christ served us.
We have not been true to the mind of Christ.
We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.

We confess to you, Lord ...

all our past unfaithfulness: the pride, hypocrisy, and impatience of our lives,

Lord, have mercy.

Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people,
Lord, have mercy.

Our anger at our own frustration, and our envy of those more fortunate than ourselves,
Lord, have mercy.

Our intemperate love of worldly goods and comforts, and our dishonesty in daily life and work,
Lord, have mercy.

Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to commend the faith that is in us,
Lord, have mercy.

Accept our repentance, Lord ...
for the wrongs we have done,
for our blindness to human need and suffering,
and our indifference to injustice and cruelty,
Accept our repentance, Loving God.

For our prejudice against those of other races and cultures
The systemic racism endemic in our world,
And our judgements based on skin colour or background,
Accept our repentance, Loving God.

For our exclusion and persecution of the diverse and the different,
Those of many genders and sexualities,
and those who do not conform to what we have considered 'the norm';
Accept our repentance, Loving God

For all false judgments,
for uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbours,
and for our prejudice and contempt toward others,
Accept our repentance, Loving God.

For our waste and pollution of your creation,
and our lack of concern for those who come after us,
Accept our repentance, Loving God.

Restore us, good and gracious God, and let your anger depart from us;
Favourably hear us, for your mercy is great.

Accomplish in us the work of your salvation,
That we may show your glory in the world.

By the cross and passion of your Son our Lord,
Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection. Amen.

The Collect of the Day/Closing Prayer

Let us hold this moment open to the Spirit of God

Almighty God,
look graciously, we pray, on this your family,
for whom our Lord Jesus Christ
was willing to be betrayed
and given into the hands of sinners,
and to suffer death upon the cross;
who now lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

All **Amen**

Were you There (Community Choir Recording)