



GOOD FRIDAY EVENING
PRAYERS AROUND THE CROSS

INTRODUCTION

We are coming to the end of our Lenten journey. This afternoon we called to mind the events of Holy Week and venerated the cross of Christ's Passion. This evening we set aside an hour to watch and wait together as we sit in quiet prayer and reflection around the cross.

A LOVE POURED OUT WITHOUT STINT OR MEASURE

Kneeling in the candlelit darkness, with the hymns almost whispered in a tender, gentle awe, I was aware of Christ's givenness. Of the love poured without stint or measure. Of the grace that is with me now, regardless of what I offer. I did not need to give, because all Love was already given to me. All that was needed was my joy in knowing this truth.

Lent is, I think, the nourishment of joy. It's the honing of sight, the hushing of mind, so that Love can make his presence potently known. In Lent a great quieting and centering of soul and self takes place. Reflect on these words:

*Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.
Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.*

Christ, in whom dust is formed back into living love.

Sarah Clarkson *Living Splendor* sarahclarkson.com

pause for silent prayer and reflection

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

After this, Jesus knew that everything had now been completed, and to fulfil the scripture perfectly he said: "I am thirsty."

A jar-full of vinegar stood there, so putting a sponge soaked in the vinegar on a hyssop stick they held it up to his mouth. After Jesus had taken the vinegar he said: "It is accomplished," and bowing his head he gave up his spirit.

pause for silent prayer and reflection



PRAYER FOR OUR PARISH

We say together:

Dear Father, pour out your Holy Spirit on our parish that we may grow ever closer to you, showing your loving kindness to others.

May our parish be a place of welcome for all, offering companionship to the lonely, shelter to the stranger and comfort to the broken. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Saviour. Amen.

Anne O'Connor

CLOSING PRAYER

We say together:

Watch now, dear Lord, with those who wake or watch or weep tonight; and give your angels charge over those who sleep.

Tend your wounded ones, O Christ;
rest your weary ones,
bless your dying ones,
soothe your suffering ones,
shield your joyous ones
and all for your love's sake.
Amen.

St Augustine

PRAYER FOR PEACE

God of mercy,
we lay before you all who suffer violence in places of conflict and war.
Shower upon your people the spirit of justice and reconciliation.

And so we pray:

**ALL: Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy,
Lord have mercy.**

We pray for those who live in fear of the other;
for all who consider violence to be the way forward.
We pray for all who by acting in hate dehumanise themselves.

And so we pray:

**ALL: Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy,
Lord have mercy.**

Iona Community (adapted)

pause for silent prayer and reflection

BE SOWERS OF HOPE

The Way of the Cross ... is the way of hope,
the way of the future.

Those who take up this way with generosity and faith
give hope and a future to humanity.
And I would like you to be sowers of hope.

Pope Francis World Youth Day Krakow 2016

MUSIC: *Christ has no body now but yours* featuring. Josh Garrells
from the album *The Porter's Gate Work Songs:
The Porter's Gate Worship Project Volume 1 (live)*



MEDITATION

Today, in faith, we have accompanied Jesus as he takes the final steps of his earthly journey, the steps that lead to Calvary. We have heard the cries of the crowd, the words of condemnation, the insults of the soldiers, the lamentation of the Virgin Mary and of the women. Now we are immersed in the silence of this night, in the silence of the cross.

pause for silent prayer and reflection

What remains now before our eyes? A crucified man, a cross raised on Golgotha, a cross which seems a sign of the final defeat of the One who brought light to those immersed in darkness, the One who spoke of the power of forgiveness and of mercy, the One who asked us to believe in God's infinite love for each human person.

pause for silent prayer and reflection

Let us look more closely at Jesus crucified between earth and heaven. Let us contemplate him more intently, and we will realize that the cross is not the banner of the victory of death, sin and evil, but rather the luminous sign of love, of God's immense love, of something that we could never have asked, imagined or expected: God bent down over us, he lowered himself, even to the darkest corner of our lives, in order to stretch out his hand and draw us to himself, to bring us all the way to himself.

pause for silent prayer and reflection

The cross speaks to us of the supreme love of God and invites us, today, to renew our faith in the power of that love, and to believe that in every situation of our lives, our history and our world, God is able to vanquish death, sin and evil, and to give us new, risen life.

In the Son of God's death on the cross, we find the seed of new hope for life, like the seed which dies within the earth.

Pope Benedict XVI Good Friday The Colosseum 2011

pause for silent prayer and reflection

MUSIC: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, The Northumbria Community
from the album *Waymarks (Songs for the Journey)*

FINDING TRUE FREEDOM

Following Jesus is the way to enter into the struggle of surrendering to God's love to find true freedom.

The way is the way of the cross, and true freedom is the freedom found in the victory over death. Jesus' total obedience to his Father led him to the cross. He held on to nothing; there was nothing was left for him to cling to.

Only when I surrender myself completely to God's love can I expect to be free from endless distractions, ready to hear the voice of love, and able to recognize my own unique call.

Henri Nouwen *The Road to Daybreak*

pause for silent prayer and reflection

PRAYER

We say together, pausing in between each line to pray silently:

I come to you, Lord, with the story of my life,

I come to you, Lord, with all my cares,

I come to you, Lord, with all my frailty and shortcomings,

I come to you, Lord, with all my fears,

I come to you, Lord, with complete trust in your love for me,

I come to you, Lord.

Pope Francis *Stations of the Cross 2024*

pause for silent prayer and reflection



SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE

By embracing the wood of the cross, Jesus embraced the nakedness, the hunger and thirst, the loneliness, pain and death of men and women of all times.

We are called to serve the Crucified Jesus in all those who are marginalized, to touch his sacred flesh in those who are disadvantaged, in those who hunger and thirst, in the naked and imprisoned, the sick and unemployed, in those who are persecuted, refugees and migrants.

There we find our God; there we touch the Lord.

Pope Francis *World Youth Day Krakow 2016*

MUSIC: *Van Gogh* **Virginio Aello and Vesislava**
from *Works for Piano and Cello*

PRAYER FOR PEACE FOR ALL PEOPLE

God of mercy, help us to listen to your voice
a voice that speaks of peace to all people.

Let the sound resonate within us,
until a whisper becomes a shout which cannot be ignored.

Move us with your love,
so that our actions echo your peace,
and we may bring comfort to those touched by conflict.

Fill us with your hope, O Lord,
and quiet the fear and hatred which divides us,
as we seek to build a future together, of true and lasting peace.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, Prince of Peace,
Amen.

Catherine Gorman CAFOD

pause for silent prayer and reflection