

# Liturgy for Great (Good) Friday

The worship of the church during this Great Three Days of Pascha (Easter), which began last night, now continues. The church has been stripped of all its usual colour in order to highlight a single reality: the love of God shown in the cross of Christ.

The communion table is not present. At the appropriate time, it will be replaced by the more literal 'altar' of the Cross. The paschal candle remains burning.

**Choir Anthem** *Are ye then come out?* by Michael Haydn

The congregation stands.

This is the day when life is raw, quivering, terrifying: the day of numbed emotions, the day of blunt nails and splintered wood, of bruised flesh and red blood. This is the day we loathe, when hopes are crushed and long-held pretences fall away. It is also the day of hope, because today we learn that even the worst we can do is not able to kill the love of God.

Let us pray.

Gracious God, your love is a light in our darkness, vulnerable, unquenchable.

***We would stand with Christ,  
in the midst of the horrors of this world  
where betrayal and death  
threaten your love and peace.***

God, we need a faith that is able to face the suffering and terrifying brutality of our world.

***We need a faith that is unafraid  
of the brother or sister whose skin is a different colour,  
who speaks with a different accent,  
or dances to a different song.***

We need a faith that is able to face the horror of hunger in a world that has enough for everyone.

***We need a faith  
that won't avoid the reality of death squads  
or the chilling terror of torture.***

We need a faith that won't ignore the hardened greed that sells thousands of children into the slavery of prostitution.

***We need a faith that can face the reality  
that human beings can be killed by other human beings,  
people who judge other people to be a threat to their  
'order' or 'welfare', their wealth or piety.***

We need a faith that refuses the way of cynicism and resignation, choosing, instead, to look for beauty, love and goodness in the world.

***We need a faith that is red with love and anger,  
a faith that loves liberty and is willing to die for it.***

God take us again to the cross.

***God, take us again to the cross.***

Christ, our victim, whose form was disfigured and whose body was torn open upon the cross;

***Open wide your arms  
to embrace our tortured world,  
that we may turn not away our eyes  
but, instead, abandon ourselves to your mercy.  
Amen.***

Hymn 339 *O Sacred Head*

The congregation is seated.

**Gospel Proclamation part 1:** John 18.1-12

Again and again we have bound and taken you captive, O Lord,  
**Because it's easier,  
easier than facing the reality of what you ask of us.**

Again and again you have been taken captive and your voice silenced.  
**Again and again  
you have been dragged out of the cupboard,  
whenever it seems that invoking your name will justify  
our attempts to gain what we want at the expense of  
others.**

**Gospel Proclamation part 2:** John 18.13-28a

The following chant is sung through twice:

O, Bro-ther Je-sus, where have we left you,  
Sav-our and Lo-ver of all?

**Gospel Proclamation part 3:** John 18.28b-38a

The chant is sung twice more:

**O Brother Jesus . . .**

**Gospel Proclamation part 4:** John 18.38b-19.16a

Hymn 337 *O dearest Jesus*

During the singing of the hymn, a large wooden cross will be carried in and placed amongst the people.

Behold the wood of the cross  
on which the saviour of the world was hung.  
**Come, let us worship him.**

Behold the wood of the cross  
on which the saviour of the world was hung.  
**Come, let us worship him.**

Behold the wood of the cross  
on which the saviour of the world was hung.  
**Come, let us worship him.**

**Gospel Proclamation part 5:** John 19.16b-25a

Saviour of the world, what have you done to deserve this? And what have we done to deserve you? Strung up between criminals, cursed and spat upon, you wait for death and look for us, for us whose sin has brought you low. To the mystery of undeserved suffering, you bring the deeper mystery of unmerited love.

**Forgive us  
for not knowing what we have done.  
Open our eyes to what we are doing now,  
even as, through wood and nails,  
you dismember our depravity  
and transform us by your grace.**

**Scripture:** Isaiah 52.13–53.12

**Psalm 22** from 9 in the hymnbook

**The Reproaches from the Cross**

O my people, what have I done to you?  
How have I offended you? Answer me.

I brooded over the abyss,  
with my words I called forth creation:  
but you have brooded on destruction,  
and manufactured the means of chaos.



O my people, what have I done to you?  
How have I offended you? Answer me.

I breathed life into your bodies,  
and carried you tenderly in my arms:  
but you have armed yourselves for war,  
breathing out threats of violence.

**Holy God. Holy and Mighty,  
Holy and Immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

O my people, what have I done to you?  
How have I offended you? Answer me.

I made the desert blossom before you,  
I fed you with an open hand:  
but you have grasped the children's food,

and laid waste fertile lands.

**Holy God. Holy and Mighty,  
Holy and Immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

O my people, what have I done to you?  
How have I offended you? Answer me.

I abandoned my power like a garment,  
choosing your unprotected flesh:  
but you have robed yourselves in privilege,  
and chosen to despise the abandoned.

**Holy God. Holy and Mighty,  
Holy and Immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

O my people, what have I done to you?  
How have I offended you? Answer me.

I would have gathered you to me as a lover,  
and shown you the ways of peace:  
but you enclosed yourselves within the bunker of your fears,  
refusing to surrender yourselves to my love.

**Holy God. Holy and Mighty,  
Holy and Immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

O my people, what have I done to you?  
How have I offended you? Answer me.

I have torn the veil of my glory asunder,  
making the mystery of my love known  
to everyone who would look on Christ:  
but you have disfigured my beauty and turned away your face.

**Holy God. Holy and Mighty,  
Holy and Immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

O my people, what have I done to you?  
How have I offended you? Answer me.

I laboured to deliver you into life,  
as a woman labours to give birth to her child:  
but you have delighted in bloodshed,  
and laboured only to bereave the world.

***Holy God. Holy and Mighty,  
Holy and Immortal One, have mercy upon us.***

O my people, what have I done to you?  
How have I offended you? Answer me.

I gave you with the power of my Spirit,  
that you may seek truth and heal the oppressed:  
but you abandoned my gift and followed a lie,  
seeking only to be 'relaxed and comfortable'.

***Holy God. Holy and Mighty,  
Holy and Immortal One, have mercy upon us.***

### Personal Responses

In response to the Reproaches, you are invited to spend some time in contemplation and silent prayer. There will be about ten minutes of background music, during which you may wish to enact your prayer by standing at the cross or kneeling to touch the cross as you pray.

O Christ, we are stripped bare by your suffering. You see our dreams, our demons, and the secrets we keep even from ourselves. Forgive all that needs to be forgiven, heal all that needs to be healed, awaken all the good that sleeps in us, banish all the fears that paralyse us.

***May the power of your cross overshadow our lives for ever,  
and your resurrection clothe us with love and hope.  
Amen.***

### Declaration of Grace: Hebrews 10.16-22

The presiding minister picks up the cross and holds it before the people, saying:

'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,'  
says the Lord:

'I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on  
their minds.'

He also adds,

'I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.'

Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his body), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

### Gospel Proclamation part 6: John 19.25-30

The cross is struck three times with a hammer, to signify the death of Jesus as the great act of love at the heart of God the Trinity. The paschal candle is shattered to signify the going out of God's light. A time of silence is kept.

**Hymn** 342 *When I survey the wondrous cross*

### Gospel Proclamation part 7: John 19.31-37

Once again we are loathe to face up to what we have done. We quickly seek to clean up the mess, to hide the evidence, to get life back to normal again. We want it finished and the body put out of sight. Yet that disfigured body, if we would only face him, is evidence of the love we crave, and the irreplaceable source of the healing we cry for.

**Give us courage, God,  
to see beyond the blood and the horror.  
Give us to know that in this death  
is the beginning of life for us all.**

**Gospel Proclamation part 8:** John 19.38-42

### **Burial**

A white cloth is placed over the cross as a sign of Christ's burial. The white cloth traditionally symbolizes the Christian's sharing in Christ's death through baptism.



**Scripture:** Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9

Let us unite ourselves in the ministry of intercession with our High Priest, Jesus Christ, who even in the face of death continued to offer up prayers and appeals for the world he loved.

### **Prayers of the People**

Those who are able may kneel during the prayers as an expression of our dependence on God.

It was priests of the holy faith and civic authorities of the holy city who conspired to get rid of Jesus. So let us pray for the leaders of church and state, that they might seek justice and truth and advance the peace and welfare of all.

We pray in silence.

Your will be done, Lord,  
**Your love be shown.**

As the darkness closed in on Jesus, in agony of heart he prayed "Father, take this cup from me." So let us pray for all who live in fear and cry out for deliverance.

We pray in silence.

Your will be done, Lord,  
**Your love be shown.**

It was with a kiss that Jesus was betrayed: a sign of heaven used for hell. So let us pray for all who have been betrayed, and for those who are crippled by the misery of having betrayed another.

We pray in silence.

Your will be done, Lord,  
**Your love be shown.**

It was ordinary people like us whose cries of "Hosanna" turned to "Crucify." So let us pray for ordinary people whose lusts for vengeance and domination crowd out the holy passion for peace; and let us especially pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

We pray in silence

Your will be done, Lord,  
**Your love be shown.**

Jesus was condemned on false charges, dragged outside the city, bruised and battered, and then tortured to death before a jeering

crowd. So let us pray for all who unjustly bear the wounds of a broken world, that their suffering might not be in vain.

*We pray in silence.*

Your will be done, Lord,  
***Your love be shown.***

Jesus sought forgiveness for those who drove nails into his flesh even before they knew their wrongdoing. So let us pray for ourselves that we might have the strength to forgive when wrong is done to us; but that our strength in forgiving may not weaken our resistance of evil.

*We pray in silence.*

Your will be done, Lord,  
***Your love be shown.***

Forsaken and alone on the cross, it was into the hands of God that Jesus entrusted his spirit. As he had come into the world with nothing, so now he departed. So let us pray for all who face impending death and for all who have departed.

*We pray in silence.*

Your will be done, Lord,  
***Your love be shown.***

Finally let us pray for all those things for which our Lord taught us to pray:

***Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,***

***your will be done  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the Kingdom, the power  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.***

That which is Christ-like within us shall be crucified. It shall suffer and be broken. And that which is Christ-like within us shall rise up. It shall love and create.

*Michael Leunig*

Lord Christ, your bitter agony was watched from afar by frightened followers:

***give us courage and love;  
so that, being steadfast in the face of horror,  
we may also know the power of your resurrection.  
Amen.***

**Song**      *Resurrection Song* by John Michael Talbot

***Take up your cross and follow the way  
The way of Jesus Christ  
His yoke is easy, his burden light.  
Our resurrection song.***

1. Any who seek to follow me  
Must deny their very selves  
Take up their own cross everyday

And follow in my steps.

2. All those who seek to gain the world  
Will lose their souls instead  
Be not ashamed of the Son of Man  
And he'll raise you from the dead.

Please leave the church in SILENCE. Our worship continues with prayers for Holy Saturday at 9 am tomorrow morning.

---

This liturgy was written by Garry J. Deverell and Nathan Nettleton. If you wish to use it in some way, please ask permission at E: [gjdweb@gmail.com](mailto:gjdweb@gmail.com). Web: [www.deverell.net](http://www.deverell.net)