

Concluding Prayer

Lord, send down your abundant blessing
upon your people who have devoutly recalled the death of your Son
in the sure hope of the resurrection.
Grant us pardon; bring us comfort.
May our faith grow stronger
and our eternal salvation be assured.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reflection

from *The Way of the Cross*, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger - Pope Benedict XVI (2005)

In Greek and Latin, the two international languages of the time,
and in Hebrew, the language of the Chosen People,
a sign stood above the Cross of Jesus, indicating who he was:
the King of the Jews, the promised Son of David.

Pilate, the unjust judge, became a prophet despite himself.
The kingship of Jesus was proclaimed before all the world.

Jesus himself had not accepted the title "Messiah",
because it would have suggested a mistaken, human idea
of power and deliverance.

Yet now the title can remain publicly displayed
above the Crucified Christ.

He is indeed the king of the world.

Now he is truly "lifted up".

In sinking to the depths he rose to the heights.

Now he has radically fulfilled the commandment of love,
he has completed the offering of himself,
and in this way he is now the revelation of the true God,
the God who is love.

Now we know who God is.

Now we know what true kingship is.

Jesus prays Psalm 22, which begins with the words:
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

He takes to himself the whole suffering people of Israel,
all of suffering humanity,
the drama of God's darkness,
and he makes God present
in the very place where he seems
definitively vanquished and absent.

The Cross of Jesus is a cosmic event.

The world is darkened,

when the Son of God is given up to death.

The earth trembles.

And on the Cross, the Church of the Gentiles is born.

The Roman centurion understands this,

and acknowledges Jesus as the Son of God.

From the Cross he triumphs - ever anew.

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Prayers and Readings for Good Friday

10 April 2020



*Due to the Coronavirus pandemic,
all public acts of worship
in Catholic churches throughout Britain
are suspended
and churches are locked until further notice.*

*We offer this leaflet
as an aid to personal prayer and reflection
it includes some of the readings and prayers
from today's liturgy.*

(for use at home)

Opening Prayer

Lord,

by shedding his blood for us, your Son, Jesus Christ,
established the paschal mystery.

In your goodness, make us holy, and watch over us always.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Reading

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

See, my servant will prosper, he shall be lifted up, exalted, rise to great heights.

As the crowds were appalled on seeing him - so disfigured did he look that he seemed no longer human - so will the crowds be astonished at him, and kings stand speechless before him; for they shall see something never told and witness something never heard before; 'Who could believe what we have heard, and to whom has the power of the Lord been revealed?'

Like a sapling he grew up in front of us, like a root in arid ground. Without beauty, without majesty (we saw him), no looks to attract our eyes; a thing despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering, a man to make people screen their faces; he was despised and we took no account of him.

And yet ours were the sufferings he bore, ours the sorrows he carried. But we, we thought of him as someone punished, struck by God, and brought low. Yet he was pierced through for our faults, crushed for our sins. On him lies a punishment that brings us peace, and through his wounds we are healed.

We had all gone astray like sheep, each taking his own way, and the Lord burdened him with the sins of all of us. Harshly dealt with, he bore it humbly, he never opened his mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughter-house, like a sheep that is dumb before its shearers never opening its mouth.

By force and by law he was taken; would anyone plead his cause? Yes, he was torn away from the land of the living; for our faults struck down in death. They gave him a grave with the wicked, a tomb with the rich, though he had done no wrong and there was no perjury in his mouth. The Lord

has been pleased to crush him with suffering. If he offers his life in atonement, he shall see his heirs, he shall have a long life and through him what the Lord wishes will be done.

His soul's anguish over he shall see the light and be content. By his sufferings shall my servant justify many, taking their faults on himself.

Hence I will grant whole hordes for his tribute, he shall divide the spoil with the mighty, for surrendering himself to death and letting himself be taken for a sinner, while he was bearing the faults of many and praying all the time for sinners.

Psalm

Ps 30:2, 12-13, 15-17, 25. R/. Lk 23:46

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

In you, O Lord, I take refuge. Let me never be put to shame. In your justice, set me free. Into your hands I commend my spirit. It is you who will redeem me, Lord.

In the face of all my foes I am a reproach, an object of scorn to my neighbours and of fear to my friends.

Those who see me in the street run far away from me.

I am like a dead man, forgotten in men's hearts, like a thing thrown away.

But as for me, I trust in you, Lord, I say: 'You are my God.'

My life is in your hands, deliver me from the hands of those who hate me.

Let your face shine on your servant. Save me in your love.

Be strong, let your heart take courage, all who hope in the Lord.

Second Reading

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

Since in Jesus, the Son of God, we have the supreme high priest who has gone through to the highest heaven, we must never let go of the faith that we have professed. For it is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us; but we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin. Let us be confident, then, in approaching the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in need of help.

During his life on earth, he offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death, and he submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard. Although he was Son, he learnt to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation.

Gospel Reading

From earliest times, the Good Friday Liturgy has included a reading of the account of the Passion from the Gospel according to John followed by a series of Solemn Intercessions.

You will find the text of the Passion and the Solemn Intercessions in a separate file in the Newsletter section of the parish website entitled:

Good Friday Passion according to John and Solemn Intercessions

Veneration of the Cross

At this point in the Solemn Liturgy the Holy Cross is brought into the church. We venerate the Cross, through which Jesus offered himself as both priest and victim. By his sacrifice on the cross the Lord has won our redemption:

"For Christ has ransomed us with his blood, and paid for us the price of Adam's sin to our eternal Father!"

(from the Easter Proclamation, the *Exultet*)



The Crucifix by Cimabue at Santa Croce in Florence.
Wooden crucifix painted in 1288.

"We venerate your Cross, O Lord, and praise and glorify your holy Resurrection; for by virtue of the Cross joy has come to the whole world."

(from *Crucem tuam* – an ancient chant sung during the Good Friday Veneration of the Cross)

Spiritual Communion

The Good Friday Liturgy usually concludes with Holy Communion. We now make an act of Spiritual Communion using words written by St Alphonsus Ligouri.

My Jesus,
I believe that you are present in the Holy Sacrament of the altar.
I love you above all things
and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
come spiritually into my soul
so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and for ever. Amen.