

Worship for Good Friday



Introduction

Good afternoon. My name is Andy Braunston and I work with four churches in and around Glasgow in Scotland's Central belt.

Good Friday is the saddest day in the Church's year. Our service today is simple, reflective and doesn't contain a sermon - instead we let the Biblical readings and the prayers speak for themselves.

None of our churches can meet for worship at the moment so each of us, in our own way throughout these islands, stands at the Cross to try to understand the enormity of it all. We have many theologies and explanations of the Cross but today they must stand silent in the face of the God who died. Our first reading is from the book of Isaiah.

Reading: *Isaiah 52: 12 – 53: 12*

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;

Hymn: *Praise to the Holiest in the Height*

J H Newman 1801 - 1890

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
and in the depth be praise:
in all His words most wonderful;
most sure in all His ways.

2: O loving wisdom of our God,
when all was sin and shame,
a second Adam, to the fight
and to the rescue came.

3: O wisest love!
that flesh and blood
which did in Adam fail,
should strive afresh against the foe,
should strive and should prevail.

4: And that a higher gift than grace
should flesh and blood refine,
God's presence, and His very self
and essence all-divine.

5: O generous love!
that He, who smote
in man for man the foe,
the double agony in man
for man should undergo.

6: And in the garden secretly,
and on the cross on high,
should teach His brethren,
and inspire
to suffer and to die.

7: Praise to the Holiest in the height, and in the depth be praise:
in all His words most wonderful; most sure in all His ways.

Sources, Copyright & Thanks

First reading – the NRSV Anglicised

The Passion Reading from the Jerusalem Bible

The Reproaches and General Intercessions adapted for the use of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and published in their Book of Common

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have persecuted others, that God will open their hearts to the truth and lead them to faith and obedience.

Merciful God, creator of the peoples of the earth and lover of souls, have compassion on all who do not know you as you are revealed in your Son Jesus Christ. Let your gospel be preached with grace and power to those who have not heard it. Turn the hearts of those who resist it, and bring home to your fold those who have gone astray; that there may be one flock under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us commit ourselves to God, and pray for the grace of a holy life, that with all who have departed this life and have died in the peace of Christ, and those whose faith is known to God alone, we may be accounted worthy to enter into the fullness of the joy of our Lord, and receive the crown of life in the day of resurrection.

Eternal God of unchanging power and light, look with mercy on your whole Church. Bring to completion your saving work, so that the whole world may see the fallen lifted up, the old made new, and all things brought to perfection by him through whom all things were made, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Our Father...

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.

Hymn *When I survey*

Isaac Watts 1674 - 1748

When I survey
the wond'rous Cross
on which the Prince of Glory dy'd,
my richest gain
I count but loss,
and pour contempt
on all my pride.

2. Forbid it, Lord,
that I should boast,
save in the death of Christ my God:
all the vain things
that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

3. See from his head,
his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love
flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love
and sorrow meet?
Or thorns compose
so rich a Crown?

4. His dying crimson,
like a robe,
spreads o'er his body on the Tree;
then am I dead to all the globe,
and all the Globe is dead to me.

5. Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to St John
(Jerusalem Bible)

Eternal God, by your Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified. Receive our prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in our vocation and ministry we may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Let us pray for all nations and peoples of the earth, and for those in authority among them: for the leaders of our nation, especially Elizabeth our Queen, our Prime Minister, and members of Parliament for all who serve the common good, that by God's help they may seek justice and truth, and live in peace and concord.

Almighty God, kindle, we pray, in every heart the true love of peace, and guide with your wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth, that justice and peace may increase, until the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us pray for all who suffer and are afflicted in body or in mind: for the hungry and homeless, the destitute and the oppressed, and all who suffer persecution, doubt, and despair, for the sorrowful and bereaved, for prisoners and captives and those in mortal danger, that God will comfort and relieve them, and grant them the knowledge of God's love, and stir up in us the will and patience to minister to their needs.

Gracious God, the comfort of all who sorrow, the strength of all who suffer, hear the cry of those in misery and need. In their afflictions show them your mercy, and give us, we pray, the strength to serve them, for the sake of him who suffered for us, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us pray for all who have not received the gospel of Christ: for all who have not heard the words of salvation, for all who have lost their faith, for all whose sin has made them indifferent to Christ, for all who actively oppose Christ by word or deed, for all who are enemies of the cross of Christ, and persecutors of his disciples, for all who in the name of Christ

sick and in prison and you did not visit me, and you have prepared a cross for your Saviour.

Hymn *This is Your Coronation*

Sylvia Dunstan 1955 – 1993 GIA Publications Ltd

This is your coronation –
thorns press upon your head;
no bright angelic heralds,
but angry crowds instead;
beneath your throne of timber,
and struggling with the load,,
you go in cruel procession
on sorrow's royal road.

2: Eternal judge on trial,
God's law, by law denied;
love's justice is rejected
and truth is falsified.
We who have charged,
condemned you
are sentenced by your love;
your blood pronounces pardon
as you are stretched above.

3: High priest you are anointed with blood upon your face,
and in this hour appointed the offering for our race.
For weakness interceding; for sin, you are the price;
for us your prayer unceasing, O living sacrifice.

The General Intercessions

Dear people of God, God sent Jesus into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved, that all who believe in him might be delivered from the power of sin and death and become heirs with him of eternal life.

Let us pray for the one holy catholic and apostolic Church of Christ throughout the world: for its unity in witness and service, for all church leaders and ministers and the people whom they serve, for all Christians those unable to worship this year and those always unable to openly worship, for those about to be baptized, that God will confirm the Church in faith, increase it in love, and preserve it in peace.

Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron valley where there was a garden into which he went with his disciples. Judas the traitor knew the place also, since Jesus had often met his disciples there, so Judas brought the cohort to this place together with guards sent by the chief priests and the Pharisees, all with lanterns and torches and weapons. Knowing everything that was to happen to him, Jesus came forward and said, 'Who are you looking for?' They answered, 'Jesus the Nazarene.' He said, 'I am he.' Now Judas the traitor was standing among them. When Jesus said to them, 'I am he,' they moved back and fell on the ground. He asked them a second time, 'Who are you looking for?' They said, 'Jesus the Nazarene.' Jesus replied, 'I have told you that I am he. If I am the one you are looking for, let these others go.' This was to fulfil the words he had spoken, 'Not one of those you gave me have I lost.'

Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword back in its scabbard; am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?' The cohort and its tribune and the Jewish guards seized Jesus and bound him.

They took him first to Annas, because Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had counselled the Jews, 'It is better for one man to die for the people.' Simon Peter, with another disciple, followed Jesus. This disciple, who was known to the high priest, went with Jesus into the high priest's palace, but Peter stayed outside the door. So the other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the door-keeper and brought Peter in.

The girl on duty at the door said to Peter, 'Aren't you another of that man's disciples?' He answered, 'I am not.' Now it was cold, and the servants and guards had lit a charcoal fire and were standing there warming themselves; so Peter stood there too, warming himself with the others. The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his

teaching. Jesus answered, 'I have spoken openly for all the world to hear; I have always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple where all the Jews meet together; I have said nothing in secret. Why ask me? Ask my hearers what I taught; they know what I said.' At these words, one of the guards standing by gave Jesus a slap in the face, saying, 'Is that the way you answer the high priest?' Jesus replied, 'If there is some offence in what I said, point it out; but if not, why do you strike me?' Then Annas sent him, bound, to Caiaphas the high priest.

As Simon Peter stood there warming himself, someone said to him, 'Aren't you another of his disciples?' He denied it saying, 'I am not.' One of the high priest's servants, a relation of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, 'Didn't I see you in the garden with him?' Again Peter denied it; and at once a cock crowed. They then led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the Praetorium. It was now morning. They did not go into the Praetorium themselves to avoid becoming defiled and unable to eat the Passover. So Pilate came outside to them and said, 'What charge do you bring against this man?' They replied, 'If he were not a criminal, we should not have handed him over to you.' Pilate said, 'Take him yourselves, and try him by your own Law.' The Jews answered, 'We are not allowed to put anyone to death.' This was to fulfil the words Jesus had spoken indicating the way he was going to die. So Pilate went back into the Praetorium and called Jesus to him and asked him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'Do you ask this of your own accord, or have others said it to you about me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? It is your own people and the chief priests who have handed you over to me: what have you done?' Jesus replied, 'Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent my being surrendered to the Jews. As it is, my kingdom does not belong here.' Pilate said, 'So, then you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'It is you who say that I am a king. I was born for this, I came into the world for this, to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.' 'Truth?' said Pilate. 'What is that?'

but you have given me a crown of thorns. I raised you on high with great power, but you have prepared a cross for your Saviour.

**Holy God, holy and mighty,
Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

My peace I gave, which the world cannot give, and washed your feet as a sign of my love, but you draw the sword to strike in my name and seek high places in my kingdom. I offered you my body and blood, but you scatter and deny and abandon me, and you have prepared a cross for your Saviour.

**Holy God, holy and mighty,
Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

I sent the Spirit of truth to guide you, and you close your hearts to the Counsellor. I pray that all may be one in the Father and me, but you continue to quarrel and divide. I call you to go and bring forth fruit, but you cast lots for my clothing, and you have prepared a cross for your Saviour.

**Holy God, holy and mighty,
Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

I grafted you into the tree of my chosen Israel, and you turned on them with persecution and mass murder. I made you joint heirs with them of my covenants but you made them scapegoats for your own guilt, and you have prepared a cross for your Saviour.

**Holy God, holy and mighty,
Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

I came to you as the least of your brothers and sisters; I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me,

O my people, O my church, what have I done to you, or in what have I offended you? Answer me.

I led you forth from the land of Egypt and delivered you by the waters of baptism, but you have prepared a cross for your Saviour.

**Holy God, holy and mighty,
Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

I led you through the desert forty years, and fed you with manna: I brought you through tribulation and penitence, and gave you my body, the bread of heaven, but you have prepared a cross for your Saviour.

**Holy God, holy and mighty,
Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

What more could I have done for you that I have not done? I planted you, my chosen and fairest vineyard, I made you the branches of my vine; but when I was thirsty, you gave me vinegar to drink and pierced with a spear the side of your Saviour, and you have prepared a cross for your Saviour.

**Holy God, holy and mighty,
Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

I went before you in a pillar of cloud, and you have led me to the judgment hall of Pilate. I scourged your enemies and brought you to a land of freedom, but you have scourged, mocked, and beaten me. I gave you the water of salvation from the rock, but you have given me gall and left me to thirst, and you have prepared a cross for your Saviour.

**Holy God, holy and mighty,
Holy immortal One, have mercy upon us.**

I gave you a royal sceptre, and bestowed the keys to the kingdom,

And so saying he went out again to the Jews and said, 'I find no case against him. But according to a custom of yours I should release one prisoner at the Passover; would you like me, then, to release for you the king of the Jews?' At this they shouted, 'Not this man,' they said, 'but Barabbas.' Barabbas was a bandit."

"Pilate then had Jesus taken away and scourged; and after this, the soldiers twisted some thorns into a crown and put it on his head and dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him and saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' and slapping him in the face. Pilate came outside again and said to them, 'Look, I am going to bring him out to you to let you see that I find no case against him.'

Jesus then came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said, 'Here is the man.' When they saw him, the chief priests and the guards shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' Pilate said, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him: I find no case against him.' The people replied, 'We have a Law, and according to that Law he ought to be put to death, because he has claimed to be Son of God.' When Pilate heard them say this his fears increased. Re-entering the Praetorium, he said to Jesus, 'Where do you come from?' But Jesus made no answer. Pilate then said to him, 'Are you refusing to speak to me? Surely you know I have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?' Jesus replied, 'You would have no power over me at all if it had not been given you from above; that is why the man who handed me over to you has the greater guilt.' From that moment Pilate was anxious to set him free, but the people shouted, 'If you set him free you are no friend of Caesar's; anyone who makes himself king is defying Caesar.'

Hearing these words, Pilate had Jesus brought out, and seated him on the chair of judgement at a place called the Pavement, in Hebrew Gabbatha. It was the Day of Preparation, about the sixth hour. 'Here is your king,' said Pilate to the Jews. But they shouted, 'Away with him, away with him, crucify him.' Pilate said, 'Shall I crucify your king?' The

chief priests answered, 'We have no king except Caesar.' So at that Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

They then took charge of Jesus, and carrying his own cross he went out to the Place of the Skull or, as it is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified him with two others, one on either side, Jesus being in the middle. Pilate wrote out a notice and had it fixed to the cross; it ran: 'Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews'.

This notice was read by many of the people, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the writing was in Hebrew, Latin and Greek. So the Jewish chief priests said to Pilate, 'You should not write "King of the Jews", but that the man said, "I am King of the Jews".' Pilate answered, 'What I have written, I have written.'

When the soldiers had finished crucifying Jesus they took his clothing and divided it into four shares, one for each soldier. His undergarment was seamless, woven in one piece from neck to hem; so they said to one another, 'Instead of tearing it, let's throw dice to decide who is to have it.' In this way the words of scripture were fulfilled: They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothes. That is what the soldiers did.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son.' Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

After this, Jesus knew that everything had now been completed and, so that the scripture should be completely fulfilled, he said: I am thirsty. A jar full of sour wine stood there; so, putting a sponge soaked in the wine on a hyssop stick, they held it up to his mouth. After Jesus had taken the wine he said, 'It is fulfilled'; and bowing his head he gave up his spirit.

It was the Day of Preparation, and to avoid the bodies' remaining on the cross during the Sabbath -- since that Sabbath was a day of special solemnity -- the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken away. Consequently the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with him and then of the other. When they came to Jesus, they saw he was already dead, and so instead of breaking his legs one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and water. This is the evidence of one who saw it -- true evidence, and he knows that what he says is true -- and he gives it so that you may believe as well. Because all this happened to fulfil the words of scripture: Not one bone of his will be broken; and again, in another place scripture says: They will look to the one whom they have pierced.

After this, Joseph of Arimathaea, who was a disciple of Jesus -- though a secret one because he was afraid of the people -- asked Pilate to let him remove the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission, so they came and took it away. Nicodemus came as well -- the same one who had first come to Jesus at night-time -- and he brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, following the Jewish burial custom. At the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in this garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been buried.

Since it was the Jewish Day of Preparation and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there."

Music Surely He Has Born Our Iniquities – Handel's *Messiah*

The Reproaches *please join in with the responses in bold*

The Reproaches are a liturgical text from the 9th Century used on Good Friday, or in Eastern Churches on Holy Saturday. The version we use today have been adapted for use in the Presbyterian Church of the USA.