

Good Friday and Holy Saturday

As we contemplate new ways in which to do church around socially distancing or self-isolating ourselves, let us set aside between 1 – 2 pm on Friday to come together in silent prayer; calling to mind our Lord Jesus Christ, the disciples, our close family and friends, and our Church family.

The Collect

Eternal God,
in the cross of Jesus we see the cost of our 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.

All Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

Isaiah 53:6-9

6 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.

7 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. **8** 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.

9 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.

Reflect on this passage.

Spend a few minutes in silence, allowing your imagination to consider this passage afresh. Which of the iniquities laid on Jesus are yours?

Anthem

You are worthy, O Lamb, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and nation;

All We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,

because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,

All to him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb

be praise and honour, glory and might,

for ever and ever. Amen.

Matthew 27:57-60

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus.

He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him.

So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock.

He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away.

Mark adds that Joseph was “a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God” (15:43).

Luke describes Joseph as “a good and righteous man who, though a member of the council, had not agreed to their plan and action” (23:50-51).

John describes Joseph as a “secret” disciple, “because of his fear of the Jews” (19:38).

Mark adds that Joseph went “boldly” (15:43).

Mark specifies that Joseph “taking down the body, wrapped it...” but does not say that the tomb was Joseph’s own.

Luke adds that “no one had ever been laid” in this tomb before (23:53).

John says that Nicodemus also came with myrrh and aloes, and helped to wrap Jesus (19:39-40).

Reflect on this passage.

Joseph of Arimathea enters the story of our faith-community precisely at the moment when faith and hope seem to be dead and defeated.

While all the other named disciples responded to and came into relationship with the living Jesus, Joseph has hung back, keeping out of the spotlight. But precisely at this point, he steps forward, taking the staggering risk of identifying himself publicly as sympathising with a recently executed criminal. (Contrast Peter’s behaviour...)

Joseph, who has apparently found it hard in the past to speak out in faith, now speaks a few words to Pilate. But what the Gospels invite us to focus on is two bodies in contact, perhaps for the first and only time: Joseph physically caring for the body of Jesus, bearing its weight in his arms, working ointments between his hands to soften them, applying the ointments to cold flesh, folding linen around Christ’s limbs.

Spend a few minutes in silence, allowing your imagination to identify with Joseph, exploring what he might have seen, heard, smelt and touched. What do you think was in Joseph's heart? If you could share some of this with one or two others, how would you do it?

For some of us, there can be times when faith seems lifeless and hope feels dead. At just such a time, Joseph stepped forward to tend with exquisite care and generosity to the dead body of his Messiah. Does this 'Holy Saturday discipleship' of Joseph resonate with anything in your experience?

Matthew wants us to understand that the stone tomb in which Joseph lays Jesus is his own. Is there a stone tomb of your own making, your own design, your own expected future, that you need to lay the crucified Jesus in? In this carefully- emphasised detail, what wisdom is Matthew pointing you towards?

Acclamations

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,

All because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

This is the wood of the cross, on which hung the Saviour of the world.

All Come, let us worship.

O Saviour of the world, who by your cross and precious blood have redeemed us,

All save us and help us, we humbly pray.

Prayers of Intercession

God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world,

but that the world might be saved through him.

Therefore we pray to our heavenly Father

for people everywhere according to their needs.

Let us pray for the Church of God throughout the world:

for unity in faith, in witness and in service,

for bishops and other ministers, and those whom they serve,

for *Pete*, our bishop, and the people of this diocese,
for all Christians in Sheffield,
for those whose baptism has been delayed,
for those who are mocked and persecuted for their faith,
that God will confirm his Church in faith,
increase it in love, and preserve it in peace.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us pray for the nations of the world and their leaders:
for Elizabeth our Queen and the Parliaments of this land,
for those who administer the law and all who serve in public office,
for all who strive for justice and reconciliation,
that by God's help the world may live in peace and freedom.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us pray for God's ancient people, the Jews,
the first to hear his word:
for greater understanding between Christian and Jew,
for the removal of our blindness and bitterness of heart,
that God will grant us grace to be faithful to his covenant
and to grow in the love of his name.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us pray for those who do not believe the gospel of Christ:

for those who have not heard the message of salvation,
for all who have lost faith,
for the contemptuous and scornful,
for those who are enemies of Christ and persecute those who follow him,
for all who deny the faith of Christ crucified,
that God will open their hearts to the truth
and lead them to faith and obedience.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us pray for all those who suffer:
for those who are deprived and oppressed,
for all who are sick,
for those in darkness, in doubt and in despair, in loneliness and in fear,
for prisoners, captives and refugees,
for the victims of false accusations and violence,
for all at the point of death and those who watch beside them,
that God in his mercy will sustain them
with the knowledge of his love.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us commend ourselves and all God's children to his unfailing love,
and pray for the grace of a holy life,
that, with all who have died in the peace of Christ,
we may come to the fullness of eternal life
and the joy of the resurrection.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light,
look favourably on your whole Church,
that wonderful and sacred mystery,
and by the tranquil operation of your perpetual providence
carry out the work of our salvation:
and let the whole world feel and see
that things which were cast down are being raised up
and things which had grown old are being made new
and that all things are returning to perfection
through him from whom they took their origin,
even Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Standing at the foot of the cross, as our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**All 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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

The Conclusion

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
set your passion, cross and death between your judgement and our souls,
now and in the hour of our death.

Grant mercy and grace to the living, rest to the departed,
to your Church peace and concord and to us sinners forgiveness,
and everlasting life and glory;

for, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, you are alive and reign,
God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**