

GOOD FRIDAY: THE LITURGY OF THE LORD'S DEATH



In the neighbouring town of Battle they normally have a marble playing competition today. I believe the custom grew up in imitation of the Roman soldiers playing games, such as dice, to divide up Our Lord's possessions and to while away the time. It was just another day and another job for them. So often Good Friday is just treated like an ordinary day of the year, but it will be different this time. This year isn't the slightest bit ordinary for any of us with enforced solitude. A story of sacrifice for others is surprisingly relevant as all those who work in the health service and other caring professions continue to risk their lives for us and even, tragically, lay them down for us.

In a normal year the Maundy Thursday vigil, at Catsfield, finishes at midnight. As we leave the church you can normally hear the lambs bleating in the surrounding fields. It always makes me think of a passage in St John's Gospel when he compares Jesus to the Passover lambs being sacrificed in the Temple (John 19:31). Jesus is often called the lamb of God, because He is the perfect sacrifice offered to God. In 1 Peter 1:18-19 we are told, "You were ransomed . . . not with perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb." A prophecy about the Messiah states, "Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; Like a lamb led to the slaughter" (Isaiah 53:7). After Jesus' crucifixion, soldiers did not break His legs to kill him because He was already dead. Like the Passover lamb, His bones were unbroken.

Today involves the remembrance of a sacrifice, but we call it Good Friday, because it achieved something wonderful for all of us. St Paul states, "Our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus' death on the cross was a Passover from death to life for Himself and for all of us. By his blood we are saved from death. Jesus made it possible for us to break out of the slavery of sin and death. He gave us the hope of reaching our promised land, heaven.

†*O Lamb of God: that takest away the sins of the world; grant us thy peace!* †

The form of worship which follows is based on the normal Good Friday Service, which takes place in Crowhurst Church. Fr Michael

THE OPENING

Begin in silence and imagine yourselves prostrated before God at the enormity of what has happened today.

Almighty God, we beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross, who now liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. **Amen**

THE READINGS: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Read the above lesson.



The prophet Isaiah spoke of a suffering servant upon whom would be laid all our faults. He would be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Isaiah makes clear that this figure deserves none of this, he is innocent of all doing, but he willingly takes it on to change things for the

better for us. He is a willing lamb to the slaughter. Our Lord clearly saw His actions on the cross as a fulfilment of this. St Philip, one of the twelve apostles, is recorded in the Book of Acts as explaining to an important Ethiopian official that this passage relates to the 'good news' of what Christ has done for us (Acts 8:26-40).

Hebrews 4:14-16 and 5:7-9.

Read the above lesson.



If Isaiah stresses that Christ is like a willing sacrificial lamb then the Letter to the Hebrews stresses that He is also like a priest offering a sacrifice. In the ancient world you needed both a sacrifice and someone to offer it. Jesus Christ is not only the sacrifice but also the priest according to this reading. In the Jewish Temple the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies once a year, the most sacred room of the Temple. Jesus Christ, our high priest, makes a sacrifice, which makes it possible for us to enter not just an earthly Temple, but through the gates of heaven itself. When Christ dies on the cross the Gospels describe how the curtain of the Temple, which covered the entrance to the Holy of Holies, was ripped in two, because Christ, our Great High Priest, has made the sacrifice that opens the way back to God for everyone.

Over fifty priests have died, in Italy, after contracting the virus, which is presently wreaking

havoc across the world. Father Giuseppe Beradelli, priest to a small village near to Milan, must have been greatly loved by his flock, since they paid to buy him a respirator to help him recover. Fr Beradelli chose to donate it to a younger coronavirus patient and subsequently died. There can be no finer illustration of someone who was both a priest and a sacrifice, but who trusted in the hope that through the cross, Christ our great High Priest, has entered into the realm of death, defeated death and opened the way to new life for us.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO ST JOHN 19:1-37

Read the Gospel passage.



Having read this account remember that we can be confident that it was written by an eyewitness; the 'beloved disciple'. One of the tragic, but utterly moving parts of the story, only found in John, recounts the standing of Mary, the Mother of God, at the foot of the cross along with the Beloved Disciple, who is reasonably assumed to be St John, writer of this Gospel. This scene is illustrated in the central panel of the east window of Catsfield Church. They are close enough to have a conversation. 'Woman, behold your son!' He says to His mother. Then turning to the beloved

disciple He said *'Behold your mother!'* And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

In one respect this is simply a wonderful act of concern and love. We have ample evidence to suggest that John took this request seriously and made a home for Our Lady. But John never tells us any historical detail about Our Lord without it being there to make a deeper point. The Gospel of John wants us to see a new community; the church herself being founded at the foot of the cross. People who are not actually related to each other now become family. In the present crisis one thing we can offer the world is that sense of unity and concern for others. We follow a faith which knows all about innocent suffering, with the cross at the centre of it, but one which also knows all about pouring out generous love to bring the world together. We respond to pain and suffering with love.

THE PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL



In the intercessions, which follow, the Church pleads the sacrifice of our Lord for the needs of all people throughout the world. They follow the ancient form for today and in them we pray for the church, for the world, for the people of the Old Covenant, for those who do not believe, and for all who suffer.

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 clergy, and those whom they serve,
for Martin, our bishop, and the people of this diocese,
for all Christians in this place,
for those to be baptised
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.

Silence is kept.

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

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.

Silence is kept.

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Most gracious God and Father,
in whose will is our peace,
turn our hearts and the hearts of all to yourself,
that by the power of your Spirit
the peace which is founded on justice
may be established throughout the world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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.

Silence is kept.

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Lord God of Abraham, bless the children of your covenant, both Jew and Christian; take from us all blindness and bitterness of heart, and hasten the coming of your kingdom, where the Gentiles shall be gathered in, all Israel shall be saved, and we shall dwell together in mutual love and peace under the one God and Father or our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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.

Silence is kept.

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Merciful God, creator of all the people of the earth, have compassion on all who do not know you, and by the preaching of your gospel with grace and power, have compassion on all who do not know you, and by the preaching of your gospel with grace and power, gather them into one fold of the one Shepherd; Christ our Lord. Amen

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.

Silence is kept

Lord hear us. Lord graciously hear us.

Almighty and everlasting God, the comfort of the sad, the strength of those who suffer: hear the prayers of your children who cry out of any trouble, and to every distressed soul grant mercy, relief and refreshment, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

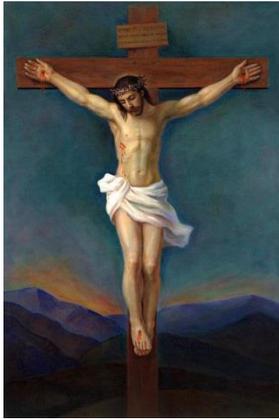
Let us commend ourselves and all God's children to his unfailing love,
and pray for the grace of a holy life,
that, with all who have died in the peace of Christ, we may come to the fullness of eternal life and the joy of the resurrection.

Silence is kept.

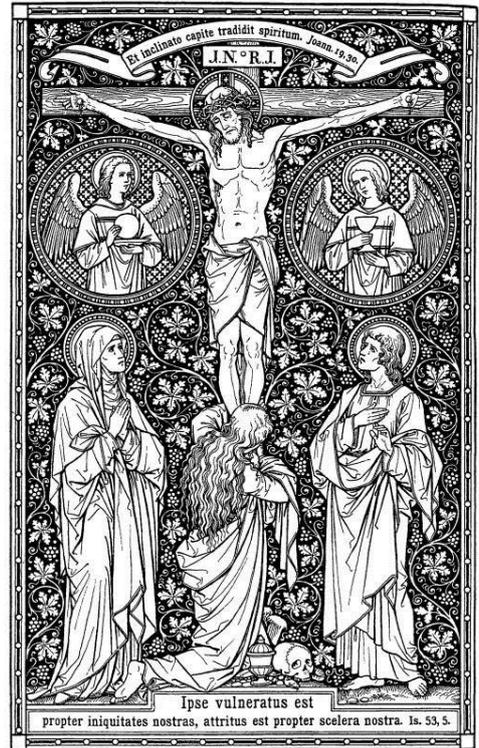
Lord hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

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. Amen

THE VENERATION OF THE CROSS



MAKING A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION



Normally the great wooden crucifix is brought in at this point. You may like to have a visible cross at home; alternatively just use the above picture. We greet the cross three times by saying:

Behold the wood of the cross on which hung the Saviour of the world. Come let us worship.

If it is your custom you may wish to kiss the foot of a cross before reciting the following hymn.

**When I survey the wondrous Cross,
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.**

**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.**

**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?**

**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.**

**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.**

Holy Communion is normally distributed from the Reserved Sacrament which was consecrated on Maundy Thursday. (Since the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the resurrection it is not celebrated between Maundy Thursday and Easter Day.) Whilst at home we are invited to make a spiritual communion as we invite the life-saving body and blood of Jesus Christ into our lives.

Let us pray for the coming of the Kingdom:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

**A PRAYER TO USE AT ANY POINT
DURING GOOD FRIDAY AS WE MEDITATE
UPON THE CROSS**

In your mind visualise yourself kneeling to receive the Blessed Sacrament and welcome the saving power of the cross into your life. Please say the words below

This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper.

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

After a time of silence say the following prayer:

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of thy Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved mankind: grant that by faith in him, who suffered on the cross, we may triumph in the power of his victory: through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

End your time of worship as silently and as gently as you can.

LORD, by this sweet and saving Sign,
Defend us from our foes and thine.
Jesu, by thy wounded feet,
Direct our path aright:
Jesu by thy nailèd hands,
Move ours to deeds of love:
Jesu, by thy piercèd side,
Cleanse our desires:
Jesu, by thy crown of thorns,
Annihilate our pride:
Jesu, by thy silence,
Shame our complaints:
Jesu, by thy parchèd lips,
Curb our cruel speech:
Jesu, by thy closing eyes,
Look on our sins no more:
Jesu, by thy broken heart,
Knit ours to thee.
Yea, by this sweet and saving Sign,
Lord, draw us to our peace and thine.