

# GOOD FRIDAY



*Christ on the Cross – Eugene Delacroix*

## **Greeting**

We gather on this Good Friday at the foot of the cross  
which calls us on, not in shame or fear,  
but ever more deeply into the costly journey towards life.  
There is wounding and there is weeping.  
In Jesus Christ, God is not separated from that.

**Song**            A man of ancient time and place

A man of ancient time and place with foreign speech and foreign face,  
reveals the glory, power and grace of costly, unexpected love.

A rabbi, schooled in Moses' Law, a male, amending Herod's flaw,  
arouses wonder, rage and awe with costly, unexpected love.

By teasing word and healing deed, a leper touched, an outcast freed,  
he bears the fruit and plants the seed of costly, unexpected love.

The cost we barely can surmise when, lifted up before our eyes,  
the face of God we recognize in crucified, unfathomed love.

May faith and hope within us grow, the way of Christ to tell and show,  
and may the Spirit breathe and blow in costly, unexpected love.

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## Prayer

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 crucified you.

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,  
as through wood and nails, you disempower our depravity  
and transform us by your grace. Amen.

From *Stages on the Way*, Wild Goose Worship Group

### Reading 1    *John 18:28-38a*

Then the chief priests took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this man?' They answered, 'If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.' The Jews replied, 'We are not permitted to put anyone to death.' (This was to fulfil what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.'

### Reflection 1

*I remember a man who had dreams of what might be:  
that people would be set free from ideas and images of God that enslaved them,  
that people would believe that through their everyday acts of human kindness they are intimately  
connected with the sacred,  
that people would live 'in peace, in God's presence all the days of their lives'  
I remember a man driven by his dreams.*

### Silence

## **Reading 2**    *John 18:38b-40*

After Pilate had said this he went out to the Jews again and told them, “I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” They shouted in reply, ‘Not this man, but Barabbas!’ Now Barabbas was a bandit.

### **Reflection 2**

*I remember a man who had his moments of breakthrough,  
when it must have seemed his dream was being realised:  
the times people really listened and responded,  
the men and women who were prepared to walk with him and support him,  
times when he spoke better and more convincingly than other times.  
I remember a man encouraged and enthused by his successes.*

### **Silence**

## **Reading 3**    *John 19:1-11*

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them. ‘Look I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him. So, Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, ‘Here is the man!’ When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, ‘Crucify him! Crucify him!’ Pilate said to them. Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.’ The Jews answered him, ‘We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.’ Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, ‘Where have you come from?’ But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, ‘Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?’ Jesus answered him, ‘You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore, the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.’

### **Reflection 3**

*I remember a man whose dream was shattered:  
who broke down and cried over what could have been,  
who knew the pain of failure and powerlessness,  
who knew what it was like to feel broken and terribly alone.  
I remember someone human like all of us.*

### **Silence**

## **Reading 5**    *John 19:13-16a*

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge’s bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, ‘Here is your King!’ They cried out, ‘Away with him! Crucify him!’ Pilate asked them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ The chief priest answered, ‘We have no king but the emperor.’ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.’

## Reflection 5

*I remember a man who knew he was going to die:  
who gathered with his friends knowing it was for the last time,  
who spoke to them about what he really believed,  
who wanted them to remember him and to keep his dream alive.  
I remember a testament to love.*

## Silence

### Reading 6     *John 19:16a-18*

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

## Reflection 6

*Here hangs a man discarded, a scarecrow hoisted high,  
a nonsense pointing nowhere to all who hurry by.*

*Can such a clown of sorrows still bring a useful word,  
where faith and love seem phantoms and every hope absurd?*

*Can he give help or comfort to lives by comfort bound,  
where drums of dazzling progress give strangely hollow sound?*

*Life emptied of all meaning, drained out in bleak distress,  
can share in broken silence my deepest emptiness;*

*and love that freely entered the pit of life's despair  
can name our hidden darkness and suffer with us there.*

*Christ, in our darkness risen, help all who long for light  
to hold the hand of promise and walk into the night.*

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## Silence

## Reflection 7

*I remember a man of extraordinary religious insight:  
utterly convinced of the connectedness between human loving and living in God,  
He was a man who was determined to give people personal authority  
in their relationship with God,  
wanting to set people free from fear of the unknown,  
setting his heart on breaking down barriers between people...  
We give thanks for the ways  
in which the life, teaching, and death of Jesus, have set us free.*

## Silence

### Prayers of the People

O God you love your world,  
and you hold all that you have created  
within your compassionate embrace.  
You hold each life torn by pain or sorrow or hatred within your aching heart.

O God, you love the world.  
We cry out for wholeness – for ourselves, for those we love, and for our world.

May your healing presence gently transform the hidden places of our lives  
where we hold pain in the secret depths.

May your loving presence be a comforting reality  
for those who find themselves in despair or lost and alone.

May your transforming presence create generosity in place of greed,  
harmony in place of hatred, and everlasting justice where evil now reigns.

O God, you love the world  
and so we bring before you from the silence of our own aching hearts  
those people and places that most need your healing, loving, transforming presence:

## Silence

O God, you love the world. This is your world.  
In Jesus you died because of the world's sin.  
In Jesus you suffered.  
May we recognise your suffering in those people and parts of the world  
for which we have prayed and may we look forward with hope to Easter Day.  
Amen.

### The Lord's Prayer

#### Sending Forth

So there it is,  
the ugly shape of beautiful wood,  
rough hewn by human hands.  
**Lord, where are you now?**

And there it is,  
a tight-shut tomb,  
a borrowed grave,  
sealed with stone and silence.  
**Lord, where are you now?**

And there it is,  
your broken body,  
shrouded in linen,  
clothed in darkness.

**Lord, where are you now?**

And somewhere stand your people,  
crying though tired of crying,  
their eyes sore and bloodshot.  
They will not sleep tonight.

**Lord, where are you now?**

And out in the streets,  
the children have stopped their playing,  
the sound of music has gone sour,  
even the unlikely folk  
fidget and wonder.

**Lord, where are you now?**

And here we are,  
saying, 'If only,'  
murmuring, 'Surely not,'  
counting the cost for once  
of our carelessness  
and our lovelessness  
and our sin.

Trying so vainly to gain all,  
We've bartered you away in the transaction.  
We have lost the one who found us.

With the Peters and the Marys of all time,  
we wait,  
for only you can tell  
whether we are worth rising for.

**Amen.**

*Form Stages on the Way, Wild Goose Worship Group*