



ANGLICAN CHAPLAINCY OF ALL SAINTS' MARSEILLE

WITH AIX-EN-PROVENCE AND THE LUBERON

THE WAY OF THE CROSS¹

At each point or station on the journey a reading is provided which acts as a narration. This is followed by a prayer.

1. JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

His accusers brought many false charges against Jesus, but He spoke not a word in His own defence. "Crucify him!" they shouted.

Pilate washed his hands, to show the decision was not his own, but he did not dare to side publicly with Jesus; instead, he was willing to content the people.

So Jesus was condemned to death.

Lord, when You were misunderstood,
you silently forgave;
but we so often respond in anger.
Lord, have mercy.

¹ From *Celtic Daily Prayer*, published by the Northumbria Community Trust (2000)

Lord, You gave us the opportunity to choose Jesus,
but for so long we have chosen rebellion
that demanded Your death.
Lord, have mercy.

2. JESUS RECEIVES THE CROSS

Jesus was scourged. The whips cut His back until it was shredded and bathed in His blood. A crown of thorns was set upon His head in mockery. Then they returned His robe to Him, and brought Him to the cross on which He was to die.

Jesus embraced the cross, resting it painfully on the smarting wounds on His back.

Lord, You were scourged and wounded;
You deserved no punishment,
but were punished in our place.
Thank You, Jesus.

When You were already hurting,
You embraced the cross.
Thank You, Jesus

3. JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Jesus had willingly embraced the cross, but His physical body was weak from lack of sleep, from the pressures of arrest and trial, and from torture and beating.

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Jesus said “Yes” but His body hesitated and He fell to His knees, determining to rise again even in His weakness.

Lord, You embraced and shouldered Your cross,
but Your body was weak.
Your body is still weak:

Your people shrink from the weight of suffering.
In our weakness, Lord, let us pray:
Your will be done.

Jesus, You were first a carpenter:
build us into what You desire,
and secure every joint tightly
that we may hold together.
Plane the rough surfaces of our relationships.
We are Your workmanship –
Your will be done.

Jesus, You said “Yes” to the Father’s will;
and only Your body hesitated.
May we, Your Body, no longer hesitate,
but follow You in Your obedience, saying:
Your will be done.

4. JESUS IS MET BY HIS BLESSED MOTHER

As Jesus again shouldered the cross and bore its burden, He glanced ahead and saw His mother. He could not stop to talk, to explain, to gather her in His arms and comfort her. All His energy was being soaked into that cross.

Who are My mother and brothers? Those who do the will of My Father.

Not My will, Father, but Yours.

Lord, You had to leave the security
of home and family, twice.
You left Your Father to be a man with us,
and left Your human family to die for us.
You had to pray to Your Father:
My God, I trust in You.

Lord, when we leave all and follow You
and it hurts those we love,

help us to know that You have been there, too;
that no one leaves behind father, mother or loved one
but is more than rewarded in the end.

Help us to pray:

My God, I trust in You.

Lord, when Your cross pierces
our own desires,
and makes us call out,
let our cry be, through our pain:
My God, I trust in You.

5. THE CROSS IS LAID ON SIMON OF CYRENE

Simon carried the cross of Christ. At first it was just a tiresome and unwelcome task he was forced into by the soldiers; only later did he recognise his privilege in shouldering the burden of the One who made the worlds.

He was compelled to carry the cross part of the way for Jesus. Simon, himself a stranger, an outcast, often misunderstood, perhaps identified with Jesus, and felt the gratitude of this Man above all men; and amid the pity Simon felt for Him, he felt a burning compassion flowing back to him from Jesus, a burning, life-changing love. Simon carried the cross of Christ.

As Simon took the weight of the cross from Jesus,
you have taught us that we must bear one another's
burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

May we carry Your cross.

Simon was one just passing by,
but suddenly he was compelled to change direction,
and, with all his strength given
to the carrying of the cross,
pressed through the crowds
to the Place of the Skull,

Golgotha, Calvary.

Sweet Jesus, like Simon,
May we carry Your cross.

6. VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

An act of compassion. A woman called Veronica places a cool cloth upon His hot and tired face. He feels the coolness of the cloth, and the love with which it is offered. And through His pain He smiles – a smile never to be lost, never to be extinguished. She reaches out to touch His face, and He leans His head into her hands, within her reach.

O blessed day! The Master touched her life, her heart, her outstretched hands. What faith! What lovely face! What timeless meeting.... O blessed Christ.

Christ of the human road, let us,
like Veronica, reach out to touch You,
and, sweet Christ,
show us Your lovely face.

Legend or living person, Veronica, by example,
teaches us to be Your witness,
that others may gaze into Your loving eyes
and know Your smile.
Show us Your lovely face.

As we see Your face by faith,
we learn to become like You, Lord Christ.
That the world may see Your glory:
show us Your lovely face.

7. JESUS FALLS FOR THE SECOND TIME

The pain, the exhaustion, the love that drives Him on – but the cross is so heavy. Again He falls beneath the weight; and in bitter resolution – Thy will be done – and in fatigue, Jesus again drives Himself up against the cross, and carries it on towards the fateful Hill of Death.

Will it never end?
I'm not as sure as when I started.
I never knew it would be like this.
But this is my firm choice:
Lord, I will go on with You.

Lord, often I fall,
And the temptation is not to rise again
And continue with You.
When I fall and others watch and laugh,
Or say "I told you so, you'll never make it",
Give me the strength to fulfil my promise:
Lord, I will go on with You.

8. JESUS MEETS THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

As Jesus continued, painfully stumbling along the road to Calvary, a group of women joined themselves to the procession, wailing in the manner normally considered appropriate for a funeral procession. But Jesus told them instead to cry out to God for themselves and their own children.

Lord, some of us are never far from tears
and some of us have forced ourselves not to cry.
Bring our tears into Your captivity and direction,
that they respond to Your voice.
You have the words of eternal life.
Lord, You have the words of eternal life.

9. JESUS FALLS FOR THE THIRD TIME

Jesus fell again. Oh God, how many times must I fall and pick up that cross again? As many as seven times? Or seventy times seven times? For ever; until this never-ending road is ended; until the impossible is completed, the unbearable borne through all eternity.

For the sake of My children, My sons, My daughters, My loved ones, My bride, My people, I must go on. I will not, I must not, give up now. The way of sorrows, the way of pain, the way of self-renunciation, the way of My cross.

How long the road You came for us, Lord,
With Your smarting burden! O Lord,
Your love has no limits.

You picked up the weight of Your cross,
the weight of our sins.
We are Your burden, an overwhelming burden;
but that burden is sweet to You
because of the love you also bear to us,
an overwhelming love.
Your love has no limits.

Lord, I know You can forgive me:
Your love has no limits.

10. JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

At the place of death the King of Life is stripped of his clothes. Naked, He came into the world; naked, He is taken from the world. Vulnerable, exposed, God became man. He was a crying, helpless, dependent baby. Now, vulnerable, exposed, His heart, His life, His body all bared before the world. He will be hung up to be mocked. But God is not mocked – His very nakedness is a parable, a sacrament, a picture of the Father's hurting heart exposed in love to us.

Lord, You were stripped of the robes You wore,
But You were the same – it didn't change You.
Things meant little to You; You never hid behind them.
You showed us the Father's heart,
So open and broken:
May we be open to You, and to each other.

Lord, for our sake You left the riches of heaven
And became poor.
You came within our reach.
May we be open to You, and to each other.

You did not hold on to even the little
You had left to call Your own.
May we be open to You, and to each other.

The nakedness of God was exposed before the world.
Lord Christ,
May we be open to You, and to each other.

No robe was left now upon Your tired shoulders,
just a crown of mockery on Your head.
You were still a King.
You loved, and won rejection and pain –
but still You loved.
May we be open to you, and to each other.

11. JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

The journey was at an end. Jesus was quickly thrown backward with His shoulders against the wood. The soldier felt for the depression at the front of the wrist; he drove a heavy, square, wrought iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly, he moved to the other side and repeated the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly. The title "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" was nailed into place, and the cross-bar lifted into position. The left foot was pressed backward against the right foot.

With both feet extended, toes down, a nail was driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed.

The victim was now crucified.

“Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.”

He is our peace.

Jesus, our sin put the nails in Your hands.

It was love that held You there.

Jesus, our sin put the nails in Your feet.

It was love that held You there.

The soldiers hoisted Your cross on high.

You were their prisoner;

But no one took Your life away from You.

You gave it willingly, freely.

It was love that held You there.

You were lifted high upon that cross,

even as You had prophesied when You promised:

“I, if I be lifted up from the earth,

Will draw all people to Me.”

It was love that held You there.

12. JESUS DIES UPON THE CROSS

As Jesus slowly sagged down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shot along the fingers and up into the arms to explode in the brain. As He pushed Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He placed His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there was searing agony as the nail tore through the nerves. As the arms fatigued, great waves of cramps swept over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. Jesus fought to raise Himself, in order to get even one short breath. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

To the thief dying by His side: "Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

To His mother and His closest friend: "Woman, behold thy son – "Behold thy mother."

In the words of the Psalm foretelling the death of the Messiah, He cried: "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Father God, You waited
through the long hours of agony,
when He was robbed even
of the sense of Your love, Your presence,
when the sin and disease and hatred
and darkness overwhelmed Him so greatly.
He was wounded for my transgressions.

Father, what love is this of His?
What love is this of Yours
that His dying love reflects?
Your forgiveness for me,
as we gaze on His sacrificial death,
is as truly an undeserved gift
as the pardon He spoke to the dying thief.
It is mine if I will only receive:
He was wounded for my transgressions.

13. JESUS IS TAKEN FROM THE CROSS

Jesus could now feel the chill of death creeping through his tissues. And with a loud voice He cried "It is finished." His mission of atonement had been completed. Finally, He could allow His body to die. With one last surge of strength, He once again pressed His torn feet against the nail, straightened His legs, took a deeper breath, and uttered His seventh and last cry "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit." A while later, the soldier pierced a long spear into the side of the dead man, to His heart. The watery fluid and blood that flowed out show us He had literally died of a broken heart – not the usual crucifixion death of suffocation. The friends of

Jesus were allowed to remove His holy body, and for a moment His mother held Him again upon her lap, cradled in her arms.

Let Him sleep now. It is finished.

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?
It was for me.

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.
It was for me.

14. JESUS IS LAID IN THE SEPULCHRE

Laid in a borrowed tomb, awaiting the sign of Jonah
– the only sign that would be given to His generation
– that after three days and nights in the womb of the earth,
the belly of the fish, the grave and hell,
He would come forth to do His Father's will
– Jesus the humble Son of God, the exultant Son of Man,
the eternal contradiction, the Blessed One.
The end is not yet. Weeping endures for a night,
but joy comes in the morning.
The good news – “He is risen”-
will burst upon the Son-rise.

Therefore with joy shall we draw water
out of the wells of salvation.

When all is dark
and Hope is buried,

it is hard to trust His words
that promised, before the pain:
He died that I might live.

In His death is my birth.
He died that I might live.

In His life is my life.
He died that I might live.