



## ***All Saints' Marseille***

***29<sup>th</sup> March 2024***

***Good Friday***

***The Stations of the Cross***

**Music: Crux Fidelis**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXGKd7-G84Q>

Faithful Cross, above all other,  
One and only noble tree,  
None in foliage, none in blossom,  
None in fruit thy peer may be;  
Sweetest wood and sweetest iron,  
Sweetest weight is hung on thee.

*Words: attributed to Venantius Fortunatus (6<sup>th</sup> cent.)*

*Music: attributed to John IV, King of Portugal (1604-1656)*

### **Introduction**

Today we will walk in the footsteps of Jesus, in the way of the cross; we open ourselves to share in his suffering, his arrest and trial, his torture and death. This is a profound and moving experience and, if we allow it, a transforming one. Walking with Jesus in his passion can help us to recognize that we walk in his footsteps as we live through our own trials, our own painful memories. The journey may even bring us to tears. Tears, in all their vulnerability, are a profound gift of God: they can express sorrow and pain and they can equally express joy and thankfulness. Tears often come at a moment of release or realization, as a sacrament, an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Before he entered Jerusalem,

Jesus stood weeping at the plight of the people. His compassion, his tears, moved him towards the way of the cross.

### **Reading - Luke 19.41-44**

As Jesus came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, 'If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.'

### **Prayer**

Compassionate God, as we walk with Jesus in the way of the cross touch us deeply. If we encounter tears, may we know them as your gift, blessing us as we offer you our own deepest struggles and pain. May your passionate love for each of us and for this world release in us the energy to live through all things, offering the most painful places to you, trusting in your love which changes and transforms even the toughest experiences. As we offer this pilgrimage, we offer ourselves; walk with us now, we pray.

**Amen.**

### **Hymn**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3QPEUIbaNio>

O sacred head, surrounded  
By crown of piercing thorn!  
O bleeding head, so wounded  
Reviled and put to scorn!  
The pow'r of death comes o'er you,  
The glow of life decays,  
Yet angel hosts adore you  
And tremble as they gaze.

I see your strength and vigour  
All fading in the strife,  
And death with cruel rigour,  
Bereaving you of life;  
O agony of dying!  
O love to sinners free!  
Jesus, all grace supplying,  
O turn your face on me.

In this, your bitter passion,  
Good Shepherd, think of me  
With your most sweet compassion,  
Unworthy though I be:  
Beneath your cross abiding  
For ever would I rest,  
In your dear love confiding,  
And with your presence blest.

*Words: Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676), trans. Henry W. Baker (1821-1877)*

*Tune: Passion Chorale - Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612)*

## **The first station - Pilate condemns Jesus to die**

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

**All** By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

### **Reading - Luke 23.20-25**

Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; but they kept shouting, 'Crucify, crucify him!' A third time he said to them, 'Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.' But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

### **Reflection**

Fear is at the heart of this act of injustice. For Pilate, it's the fear that he will lose control of the crowd if he doesn't go along with them. For the religious authorities, it's the fear that Jesus will undermine their traditions and their monopoly on God. And for the fickle crowd, who were so recently crying Hosanna to welcome Jesus, what's the fear for them? Crowds take on a dynamic of their own, but they are made up of people like us, with all our personal agendas - fears about looking foolish, of being excluded, of being disappointed. We condemn people today, building them up one moment, toppling them the next. Pilate could find no grounds, no evidence, no reason, but all these mean nothing when we want blood.

**Silence** (about one minute)

## Prayer

Jesus, you were condemned, but you do not condemn us. We shed tears of shame. No one stood up for you, no one defended you; your innocence was clear, but our fear won the day. Have mercy upon us, and give us grace to speak out in the face of injustice today. Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray. Amen.

## Chant

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6tVReXsioM>

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

## The second station - Jesus accepts his cross

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

**All** By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

## Reading : John 19.17

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.

## Reflection

In the face of the crowd's fears and passions, Jesus hardly speaks, he appears almost passive. Jesus does not respond, does not defend himself or hit back, he accepts the cross. This is not weakness or compliance, it is much deeper than that. Jesus had said, 'turn the other cheek' and now, when it really counts, he shows us how to live that out. When someone hurts us we can choose not to retaliate, not to hurt back. This is a powerful passivity, accepting and enduring, when something cannot be changed.

## Silence

## Prayer

Jesus, seeing your suffering we shed tears of sorrow. You didn't deserve the cross, you didn't hurt anyone, you turned the other cheek and absorbed all that was thrown at you, choosing not to pass it on, but our cruelty won the day. Have mercy upon us when we throw things at others, showing us a different way; and give us grace to endure when things are thrown at us.

Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray. Amen.

## **Chant**

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

## **The third station - Jesus falls for the first time**

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

**All** By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

### **Reading: Psalm 38.17-20**

For I am ready to fall, and my pain is ever with me. I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin. Those who are my foes without cause are mighty, and many are those who hate me wrongfully. Those who render me evil for good are my adversaries because I follow after good.

### **Reflection**

The weight of the cross was too much to bear alone and tradition has it that Jesus fell under its weight. An innocent man, condemned to a criminal's death, he was carrying a burden that was not his own. Human weakness and injustice had played its part; human cruelty and inhumanity had devised the path. The cross represents the weight of human sin and hate, carried by a man who showed only love and goodness. The decisions we make can add to the burdens that others have to bear: our trading with poorer nations, our demand for cheap products, our shirking of responsibility, our passing on the blame, our shaming of others, can all add to that weight.

### **Silence**

### **Prayer**

Jesus, in the face of your humanity we shed tears of failure: we admit that our choices add to the weight you bear. Beyond all human enduring, you stumbled and fell, you took our worst and absorbed it. Have mercy upon us and give us grace, when we stumble, to stand again. Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray. Amen.

## **Chant**

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

## **The fourth station - Jesus greets his mother Mary**

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

**All** By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

### **Reading : John 19.26-27**

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

### **Reflection**

We know that Mary stayed close throughout the day of the crucifixion and John's gospel records Jesus calling to her, asking John to care for her and she for him, and creating new bonds of family between them. Parents who have had to watch their children suffer and die know what this encounter will have been like. It is so much out of the natural order. The incredible intimacy of bearing and suckling a child can create a bond that goes to the core of who we are as parents and children. Our children, our parents, bring tears of joy and of sorrow at different times.

### **Silence**

### **Prayer**

Jesus, beloved son, we shed tears of love, for the deepest bonds of relationship, for our parents, for our children, for our own losses and separation, for key relationships torn apart by violence or distrust. Have mercy upon us and give us grace in our deepest relationships. Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray. Amen.

### **Chant**

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

## **The fifth station - Simon helps carry the cross**

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

**All** By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

## **Reading : Mark 15.21**

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.

## **Reflection**

So much of our life isn't chosen. Events just happen to us, unexpected, unlooked for, sometimes unwanted. Why me? Simon would have every excuse to say, 'Why me?' Jesus was nothing to him, a stranger: why should he have to carry the cross? Sometimes we are thrown into such situations and we can choose how to respond. Our willingness to share a burden, to give time, to go out of our way, can transform someone else's situation. Jesus said that whenever we give even a cup of water to someone in need, we do so to him. One day we may need to rely on the kindness of strangers, when we are in need.

## ***Silence***

## **Prayer**

Jesus, helped by Simon, we shed tears of thankfulness for the kindness of strangers, helping in time of need, acknowledging those who help us bear the weight we carry. Have mercy upon us when we fail to recognise you in the faces of those we meet; and give us grace to see you in the face of friend and stranger.

Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray. Amen.

## **Chant**

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

## **The sixth station - Veronica wipes the face of Jesus**

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

**All** By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

## **Reading : Isaiah 53.2-3**

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; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.

## Reflection

Sometimes the suffering we see in the world around us can be completely overwhelming. We can feel inadequate to the task of responding: 'What can I do that would make a difference?' The legend of Veronica stepping out from the crowd to wipe the spit and mud from the face of Jesus may not be found in the Bible, but it is to be found in the spirit of Jesus' teaching. The Good Samaritan who stops and cares in small practical ways cannot deal single-handedly with the problem of crime on the road, but his care makes all the difference to the man who fell among thieves. Veronica's gesture is brave: why get involved? In her small act of compassion, Veronica for a moment restores human dignity to Jesus.

## *Silence*

## Prayer

Jesus, touched by Veronica, we shed tears of joy, for the courage of those who reach out, restoring human dignity, making even a small difference. Have mercy upon us when we missed the opportunity to share a human gesture that connects. Give us the compassion to reach out and give us grace to care.

Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray. Amen.

## Chant

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

## **The seventh station – Jesus falls for the second time**

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

**All** By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

## **Reading : Matthew 23.37-39**

'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you, desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord."'

## Reflection

The agony of Jesus falling under the weight of the cross is a powerful reminder of his humanity, his vulnerability, his weakness. Sometimes we mistakenly think of Jesus as being superhuman, all knowing, all powerful, worker of signs and wonders. However, it is the



humanity of Jesus that can reach out and connect with our own vulnerable, fragile lives. We know what it is like to keep on falling: sometimes we can't believe how many knocks we have to face in life. Sometimes we go on repeating destructive and harmful patterns, despite all our best intentions.

### ***Silence***

### **Prayer**

Jesus, seeing your humanity we shed tears of recognition for the weakness and vulnerability you share with us. When we keep falling, in all the damaging patterns of our lives, help us to find you, as we acknowledge our own weakness. Have mercy upon us when we are at our weakest and give us grace to stand again.

Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray. Amen.

### **Chant**

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

## **The eighth station - Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem**

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

**All** By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

### **Reading : Luke 23.27-28**

A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.'

### **Reflection**

Do you sometimes find yourself weeping in sad films? It is almost as if it is easier to express grief for a person who is distant to us. We sometimes find it hard to express all true feelings for our own losses: we keep ourselves busy to avoid being overwhelmed. The women of Jerusalem were caught up in this kind of public grief, and when Jesus spoke to them it was to direct them to 'weep for yourselves and for your children'.

### ***Silence***

### **Prayer**

Jesus, who brings us home to ourselves, help us to face our own losses, to weep for our own pain, to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and not to fear. Have mercy upon

us when we fail to acknowledge our own weakness, and give us grace to grieve. Help us, with the women of Jerusalem, to weep for ourselves, and through tears to know your healing love. Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray. Amen.

### **Chant**

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

## **The ninth station – Jesus falls for the third time**

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

**All** By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

### **Reading : Psalm 42.3-5**

My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, 'Where is your God?' These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God, with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival. Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help.

### **Reflection**

'Where is your God?' Where is God in such cruelty and suffering? It is a question that each of us face for ourselves, for our loved ones and for our world, when the worst happens and things just keep on going wrong. 'God, why can't you stop this?' 'My tears have been my food day and night.' Can there be any more tears? So many give up on faith in the face of such suffering: even Jesus cried out from the cross, 'Why have you forsaken me?'

### **Silence**

### **Prayer**

Jesus, in your desolation, when tears become our food day and night, you draw near to us. In your weakness, in your falling, you meet us. Have mercy upon us when we are helpless in the face of grief and suffering and give us grace to cling to you, through the darkest times. Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray. Amen.

### **Chant**

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

## **The tenth station – Jesus is stripped of his clothes**

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

**All** By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

**Reading: John 19.23-24**

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.'

### **Reflection**

The final degradation was to strip Jesus naked and display him to the people. Clothes protect us from the environment, they keep us warm. Clothes protect our modesty, our privacy, and most of us are glad to cover our bodies in public. Clothes express so much of who we are, they are an extension of our personality. In stripping Jesus, they hope to degrade and dishonour him, to humiliate and diminish him. What they could not strip away was God's glory in human form, the word made flesh, the love that would stop at nothing.

### **Silence**

### **Prayer**

Jesus, in your nakedness, when all is stripped away, we see your true glory, clothed with love that will stop at nothing. Have mercy upon us when we believe that loss and humiliation will have the final word; give us grace to know ourselves, our bodies, as glorious in your sight. Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray. Amen.

### **Chant**

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

## **The eleventh station – Jesus is nailed to the cross**

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

**All** By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

**Reading: Luke 23.32-34**

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one

on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.'

### **Reflection**

Human beings are capable of such savagery! To take a nail and drive it through skin and bone, flesh and blood, knowing the agony it will cause: how can a person do that? How can we become so distorted? The gas chambers and killing fields of the world are testimony that this savagery is only just under the surface. Often it evokes a cycle of revenge and retribution that continues through generations. The only response that can stop this vicious circle is to be heard from Jesus: 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.'

### **Silence**

### **Prayer**

Jesus, in your agony, as nails are driven through your hands and feet, we weep with sorrow at our savagery. We hold the memory of our own bitter pain in the stream of your forgiveness. Have mercy upon us when we hurt you and others: help us to face the hurt honestly and, from our hearts, to ask for forgiveness. When we are hurt, give us grace to forgive, as we have been forgiven.

Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray. Amen.

### **Chant**

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

## **The twelfth station – Jesus dies on the cross**

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

**All** By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

### **Reading: Mark 15.33-37**

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

## Reflection

Death is the great unknown, the last enemy, the thing we don't mention! We prefer to talk of 'passing on' or 'falling asleep': we dare not speak death's name and yet it comes to every one of us. This was a bitter death, an agonising death: Jesus felt abandoned by God, was misunderstood by the bystanders and cried out in agony. Yet what he did changed everything. The ultimate enemy is defeated, death has become the gate of glory. Everything changes - and the curtain in the temple is torn from top to bottom!

A thousand years later his disciple Francis of Assisi was able to welcome death, recognising that Jesus' death changes death for each and every one of us: 'and thou, most kind and gentle death, waiting to hush our latest breath, thou leadest home the child of God, and Christ our Lord the way hath trod'.

## *Silence*

## Prayer

Jesus, in your death you shared the fear and pain and desolation of our human condition. You weep with us. We bring to you our own fear, the hard deaths we have known, the grief and pain and loss. Have mercy upon us and give us grace to face death without fear. Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray. Amen.

## Chant

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

## **The thirteenth station – Jesus is taken down from the cross**

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

**All** By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

## Reading: John 19.25, 31-33

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

## Reflection

The casual brutality of the soldiers is captured in the detail of this scene, breaking the legs of the crucified to tidy them away, to get the job done. But what happened next? One of the

most moving images of the crucifixion is Michelangelo's The Pietà, the Pity, the moment when the body of Jesus is taken down from the cross and laid in his mother's arms. The worst has happened. The tenderness of Mary's response cannot undo the hurt, it cannot blot out the casual brutality, it cannot reverse her son's death, but it does express solidarity with all those who have seen the worst happen.

### ***Silence***

### **Prayer**

Jesus, in your cross we see the casual brutality of our world, in your living and in your dying you meet our violence with your tenderness, our hatred with your pity. With Mary we bring to you our hurts and disappointments, the sword that pierces our own heart. Have mercy upon us when our hearts and hopes, our bodies and beliefs, are broken and give us grace to let go into your embrace.

Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray. Amen.

### **Chant**

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

## **The fourteenth station – Jesus is placed in the tomb**

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

**All** By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

### **Reading: Matthew 27.57-61**

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. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

### **Reflection**

How do you make amends? When you know you have done wrong, how do you make it right? Pilate knew in his heart of hearts that Jesus was innocent: Pilate had acted out of political necessity. Joseph of Arimathea, like all of the disciples, had been helpless, unable to stop the relentless path of events. Now, both could try to redeem the situation by acting honourably, giving Jesus the dignity of a proper burial, a clean shroud and a new tomb. We all get things wrong, but do we have the courage to try to put things right? Or we may be like the women,

the Marys, who have done all that needs to be done, so that they do not need to busy themselves with action at this point: for them, they simply stay with it, they sit and wait.

### ***Silence***

### **Prayer**

Jesus, your love sets us free from past mistakes, you show us how we can set things right. May our tears give us clear sight either to take the action needed to move forwards or simply to be where we are and wait. Give us the courage we need to wait in your presence and to walk in your way. Have mercy upon us and give us grace to draw breath, simply to be there, and, when the time is right, to take the next step.

Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray. Amen.

### **Chant**

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

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

**All By your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.**

God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

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

We preach Christ crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

**All By your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.**

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

**By your Holy Cross, you have redeemed the world.**

### **Hymn**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MF9tVfTMXs>

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 mingling down!  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

*Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748)*

*Tune: Rockingham - harmonised by Edward Miller (1735-1807)*

Picture: Christ carrying the Cross, El Greco (1541-1614), The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Prayers and reflections from: *Apprentices and Eyewitnesses* by Chris Thorpe, Canterbury Press, 2019