

Good Friday Service 2020 (adapted for home)

Welcome to this Good Friday service of reflections, readings and hymns. Take a few minutes of quiet and stillness in preparation.

If you have a hymnbook, slowly read **STF 285 Were you there when they crucified my Lord** or listen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLJOIjLAmOA>.

In the Gospels we can read the testimony of those who were present at the cross - those who experienced first hand the shock, pain and anguish of watching Jesus dying.

This has added poignancy for us this Easter as we live through the Coronavirus epidemic. We hear of unbearable sadness of loss and separation, of the distress of the bereaved and the isolation and loneliness of all. Some of us may be ill or fearful.

As we read, perhaps with a deeper understanding, the accounts of people who were present and involved in the actions leading up to Jesus' crucifixion, we can be there too, in imagination if not in the flesh, confronted by the Christ who died for all and for us.

Let us pray.

Living God

In so many ways this is the blackest of days

Recalling the darkest of moments;

A day on which hearts were broken

And faith tested to the limit;

A day of appalling suffering and agonising death;

A day when it seemed as though love was overwhelmed.

Yet in the humiliation and pain of your Son, in the sorrow of Mary and the despair and desertion of the disciples,

You were there, at work, with your saving power.

Living God,

At this difficult time of darkness for us now

as the world struggles with the Coronavirus epidemic,

assure us of your compassionate and healing presence with your people,

through the power of your spirit,

seen in the unlooked for kindness of strangers,

the courage and dedication of all NHS staff and social carers,
the long hours of effort by essential workers.
As we recall those terrible yet amazing events of Good Friday,
Give us new insight into what you did that day,
For us and for all the world.
Amen.

Reading : John 19.17 - 30

(Pause)

Meditation of Mary, wife of Clopas

He was silent, quite still.
And I thanked God.
That at last it was over, his ordeal ended.
Just a few moments before,
He had cried out, his voice strong,
"It is finished!"
An acknowledgment of defeat, some said afterwards.
But it wasn't,
Not for those who heard it,
Not for those with ears to hear.
It was altogether different,
Like sunshine after storm,
Like rain after drought,
Like laughter after tears;
Gloriously unexpected, wonderfully surprising.
He had staked all and won;
Defeat was victory,
Darkness was light,
Death was life.

At last it was done;
He had honoured his calling;
Fulfilled his mission,
Walked the way of the cross.
It was finished,
And with a song in his heart and joy in his eyes,
He bowed his head and surrendered his spirit.

He was silent, quite still.
And I thanked God.

If you have a hymnbook slowly read **STF 280 O sacred head sore wounded** or listen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3M4uUJibpw> (slightly different words to STF)

Reading : Luke 23.44-49

(Pause)

Meditation of one of those who stood at a distance, watching (Luke 23.49)

I came to watch him die.
What did I expect?
He had warned all of us who knew him that he would meet his death here in Jerusalem,
But this, this was horrible, unjust, cruel, ugly, unbearably sad.
All the women weeping, his mother worn down with grief, yet comforted by his care, the soldiers heartless and disrespectful, taunting him;
Common criminals for companions, one begging pathetically for mercy, the other angry and insulting.
And the bleakness of the place;
The dry wind and the sun beating down on bare rock,
Then the shock of the sudden blackness, the desolation of his cry,
the realisation of his death, his head drooping, and through the storm clouds a shaft of sunlight, and strangely, the centurion on his knees at the foot of the cross.
And despite the finality of his dead body crucified there,
A sharp, unexpected conviction that this was not the end.

(Pause)

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ

your concern throughout your ministry was always for others, and not for yourself;

so we pray today for healing, comfort and hope for all those affected by the present lockdown situation, people suffering illness, anxiety or grief.

We remember that you had a special place in your heart for the poor, for children and for widows.

So we pray for patience, resilience and practical help for families with young children confined in small spaces; we pray for neighbourly connections to be made with those who live alone and continuing generosity for the poor.

We pray for the bereaved that they might find comfort and peace in the presence of Christ.

Lord Jesus Christ

you lived for others,

you died for others and you rose for all.

help us to live in turn as your people

to reach out in love and make real your compassion.

(Space for your own prayers)

We gather all our prayers and offer them to Jesus in the words of

The Lord's Prayer

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

Closing Prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ,
Living as we do in the light of Easter and the knowledge of resurrection,
We can lose sight sometimes of the darkness of Good Friday.
Yet for those who were part of it
There could be no mistake,
No escaping the reality of your death on a cross.
For them it was their darkest hour,
What seemed like the end of all their dreams,
An end to hope and a test of their faith.
Yet even there, especially there, you were at work,
Bringing your love, strength and hope to all.
Lord Jesus Christ,
Teach us that even when life seems dark,
Your light continues to shine.
Amen.

Today He who hung the earth upon the waters, is hung upon the cross.
He who is King of Angels wears a crown of thorns.
He who wraps the heavens in clouds is transfixed with nails.
The Son of the Virgin is pierced with a spear.
We bow down before your suffering, O Christ,
And in sorrowful hope await your glorious resurrection.

Read **STF 287 When I survey the wondrous cross** or listen
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBdP9EsoDFQ>

Amen.