

United Benefice of Mount's Bay

GOOD FRIDAY MEDITATION

10th April 2020 at 2pm

'WORDS FROM THE CROSS'

With Poems by Godfrey Rust



A very warm welcome to our Service of Meditation on this very special day, when we accompany Jesus as *he* walks the path of *our* salvation.

On our simple altar, here at home, we have a cross, a crown of thorns and seven lit candles, representing the seven utterances of Jesus from the Cross.

After each reading and poem, a candle will be extinguished, symbolising the encroaching darkness, following which, there will be a few moments of silence and a response from the psalms.

The central candle will remain lit. This candle represents our Lord Jesus Christ, the Light of the World that even the darkness of this day could *not* extinguish.

LET US BEGIN OUR SERVICE BY PRAYING TOGETHER

Lord Jesus Christ, on this day, we marvel again at the extent of your love, the pain you suffered that we might receive life in all its fullness.

We remember the pain of body, as thorns were twisted into your head, as you staggered under the weight of the cross, as nails were hammered into your hands and feet.

We remember the pain of mind, as you came to terms with the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter, the faithlessness of your followers and the shouts of 'Crucify!' from those who had welcomed you as their king.

We remember the pain of spirit, as you bore the sins of the world, as you experienced a sense of isolation from God, as you felt abandoned.

Lord Jesus Christ, we can never begin to understand the suffering you endured, but we know that yours was a love greater than any we can ever show and a sacrifice more costly than we can ever offer.

As we meditate on the world-changing events of Good Friday, open our eyes to the wonder of this day and help us respond in the only way we can - with deep gratitude, and with loving service, offered in your name and for your glory. AMEN.

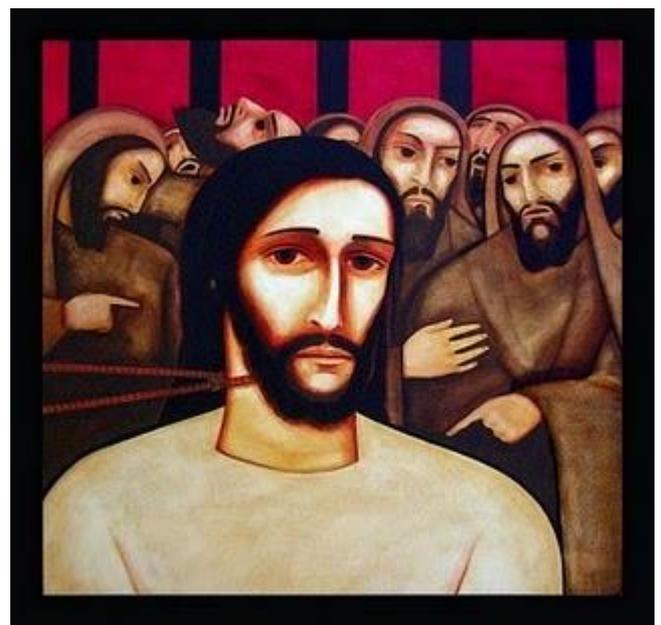
SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 27 : 27-37 & Luke 23 : 32-34

ACCOMPLICES

Father forgive them,
they didn't know what I was doing
when I slipped into humanity disguised;
my light shone in a darkness
they couldn't comprehend. Forgive them
all:

my beloved, dull accomplices;
they don't know the cost
of an immortal's suicide.
They tried to keep us
from this meeting here.

Forgive the crowd,
who made the necessary choice of
Barabbas.



*'Christ Condemned by the Sanhedrin'
by Michael O'Brien*

Forgive Pilate's wife,
whose conscience nearly ruined everything.

Forgive Judas
his kiss of death.

Father forgive them:
they don't know what we are doing.

Forgive them:
they didn't know what they were building.
We were the architects and these rough beams were cut
to meet our most exacting standards.

Forgive them:
they don't know what will be executed here;
how could they understand that
these hammer blows will be
the final acts of our first creation.

Like workmen at the launch
of some great enterprise of state,
they have come to watch
the ceremony of our great ambition.
And as they hoist me up to you -
before this brutal act of love
extinguishes my mortal life completely:

*Father forgive them,
they don't know what they're doing*

The first candle is extinguished

Silence

WE RESPOND : (from Psalm 51)

**Have mercy on me, O God:
according to your unfailing love,
wash away all my transgressions
and cleanse me from my sin.**

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 23 : 39-43

THIEF

What would you take from me thief?
These Romans took my clothes.

My friends ran off with their loyalty,
my priests have filled their pockets with my people.

I've nothing left but you,
my captive audience. It took a lot
to nail you down,
to gain your full attention.

All your life,
you worshipped at the altar of desire,
only to find it is a god unsatisfied
by less than everything.

In all your crimes, you were the victim
and now you find a god is dying next to you
and you, so skewered, you cannot even
stretch a hand out to ask for mercy.
Smile thief; you are the archetype,
the first to take his cross up and follow me.
Nothing is what it seems;
your prayer was answered long ago
and you will see breaking and entering here, on a cosmic scale.
Will I remember you?

*I tell you the truth;
today, you will be with me in paradise.*

The second candle is extinguished

Silence

WE RESPOND: *(from Psalm 65)*

**O you who hear prayer,
to you all men will come.
When we were overwhelmed,
you forgave our sins.**

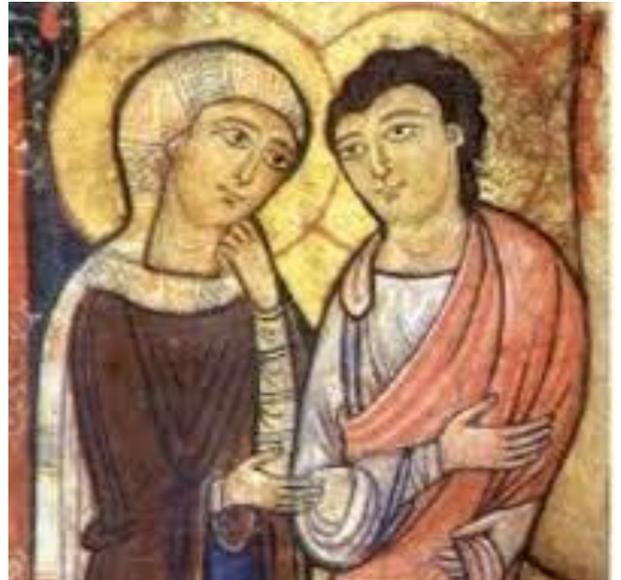


*'Christ and the Thief'
by Nikolai Ge*

SCRIPTURE READING John 19 : 25-27

SON

Woman, as I prepare to slip the leash of time,
for a moment, your grief reels me back in;
the sword pierces us both,
but you alone will feel then
the pain I feel now,
watching a mother, watching a son die.
Before you gave birth to me,
I AM and at a Word, I made time flow like
tears:
but what could I in my eternity know
of such a loss as yours?
Timeless, I became humankind –
there was no other way to learn
the meaning of this moment.
Soon, I will have gained eternity again;
you have the meantime and I will
not leave you comfortless.
Beside you is one whom
I have loved more than a brother:



'Mary and the Beloved Disciple'
(11th century icon, artist unknown)

*Dear woman, here is your son.
Son, here is your mother.*

The third candle is extinguished

SILENCE

WE RESPOND: (from Psalm 23)

**Though I walk through the valley
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me:
your rod and staff they comfort me.**

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 27 : 45-46

WAGER

To be human is to deal with death,
so I have wagered all to taste the fruit
of this desolate new Eden.

To be human is to court the risk of failure
and so
I embrace this tree of knowledge of
despair.

And to be human is to know that God may
be illusion;
so I have made myself human enough
to doubt and disbelieve.



'They Divided His Garments Among Them'
by Abraham Rattner

What else is there left for God to understand?
Faith is the gamble of a dying man.

The condemned son cries out in the dark,
guessing his Father hears, yet will not come.

What kind of love is this that keeps such silence?

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

The fourth candle is extinguished

SILENCE

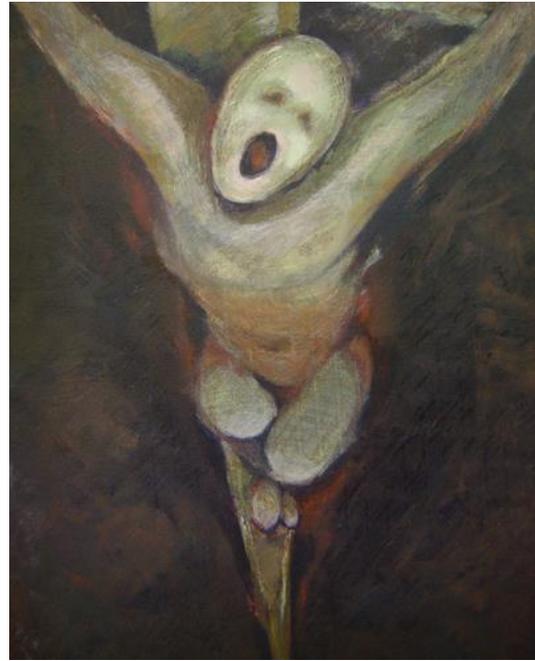
WE RESPOND: (from Psalm 22)

**My God, I cry out by day,
but you do not answer.
O Lord, be not far off:
come quickly to help me,**

SCRIPTURE READING : John 19 : 28

ANIMAL

Nothing up my sleeve -
there's no sleeve;
look on your naked God.
Look on your reflection:
this is the tree of life –
you need me.
I chose to need you –
to love you.
God became animal;
help me



'Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani?'
by Ann Kim

I thirst

The fifth candle is extinguished

SILENCE

WE RESPOND: (from Psalm 22)

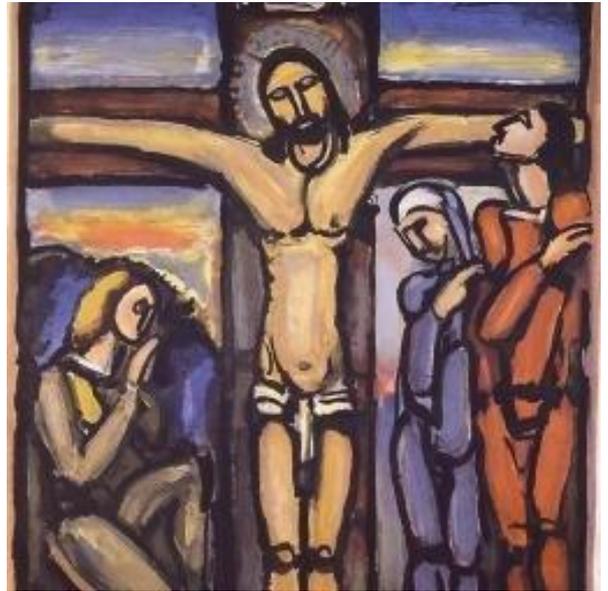
**I am poured out like water;
my heart is melted within me,
my strength is dried up like a pot shard.
You lay me in the dust of death.**

SCRIPTURE READING John 19 : 29-30

MASTERPIECE

I saw it first, this bloody work of heart,
conceived in my mind's eye *in the beginning* –
or what you call the beginning.
Time was the canvas I prepared to paint on.
I drew its outline in the life of Abraham,
my palette: history.
Its colours mixed in Israel's rise and fall.
I worked from life:
against a landscape of an Eden spoiled.

My people with their untamed, rebel hearts
stared out through masks of beauty, scarred with sin.
Painstaking detail. Light and darkness.
Then the hardest thing I ever did:
love was daubed with every brush-stroke of the
Spirit
on the unforgiving texture of the soul.
Finally, to shape the central figure, I needed
human hands.
I laboured with Mary to bring the enterprise to
birth.
Three more decades of preparation were
meticulous –
it is not irony that I was framed and hung up
here to die:
it is the point.
I am the artist and the portrait too;
painting out at last in the blood of God
a perfect self-expression: my still life.
This is my masterpiece and



'Crucifixion'
by Georges Rouault

It is finished.

The sixth candle is extinguished

SILENCE

WE RESPOND: *(from Psalm 25)*

**Show me your ways O Lord,
teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth,
for you are God, my Saviour.**

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 23 : 44-49

LEGACY

I have travelled light,
so that the leaving should be easier.
What I bequeath is left according to your will
and this new testament.

I leave a church to be built on a broken rock.
I leave nothing written down. I hear my words
blown freely on the winds of Galilee
to seed the hearts of men.
I leave no money, debts or property;
no house for shrine, no artefact for relic.
I leave just the remnant of a meal.

My cloak is cast aside and gambled for.
I leave no tomb to raid, no corpse to disinter,
no fingerprints, no blood, no DNA.

I could have gained the world,
but nothing now stands between us
but this one, last legacy:

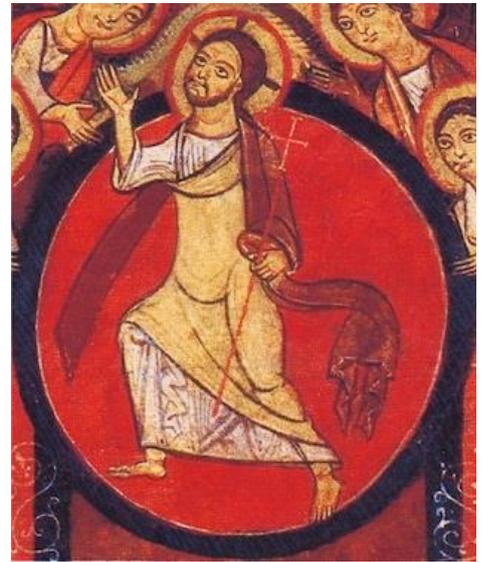
because it is written,
because it holds the only power
with which the trap of human death
will be unsprung
and because until I give it up to you,
it cannot be returned to anyone.

Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit

The seventh candle :

JESUS CHRIST - the Light no darkness can extinguish

SILENCE



'The Ascension'
(from the Cross of San Damiano)

WE RESPOND: (from Psalm 31)

**I trust in you O Lord.
You are my God.
You are my refuge.
Into your hands, I commit my spirit.**

OUR CLOSING PRAYER

**O God of all compassion, your Gospel is full of signs. The seamless robe – work of human hands – which the soldiers couldn't tear. Seamless, one piece, it reminds us of the way we belong together, with each other and with believers down the centuries. Each connection we make brings us nearer to you.
We know that Jesus was a carpenter who died on a wooden cross – the work of human hands – and so we pray:
Christ the Master Carpenter, who at the last, through wood and nails, shaped our whole salvation, wield well your tools in the workshop of your world, so that we who come rough-hewn to your bench may here be fashioned to a truer reflection of your life and your love. We ask it for your own name's sake. Amen.**

BLESSING

**May the Christ who walks on wounded feet, walk with us on the road.
May the Christ who serves with wounded hands stretch out our hands to serve.
May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart, open our hearts to love.
May we see the face of Christ in everyone and may everyone see the face of Christ in us.
May we find in the cross a sure ground for faith, a firm support for hope and the assurance of sins forgiven. And may the blessing God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and those we love and pray for this day and for evermore. AMEN.**

**We will sing 'My Song is Love Unknown'
Please join in if you are able.**

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