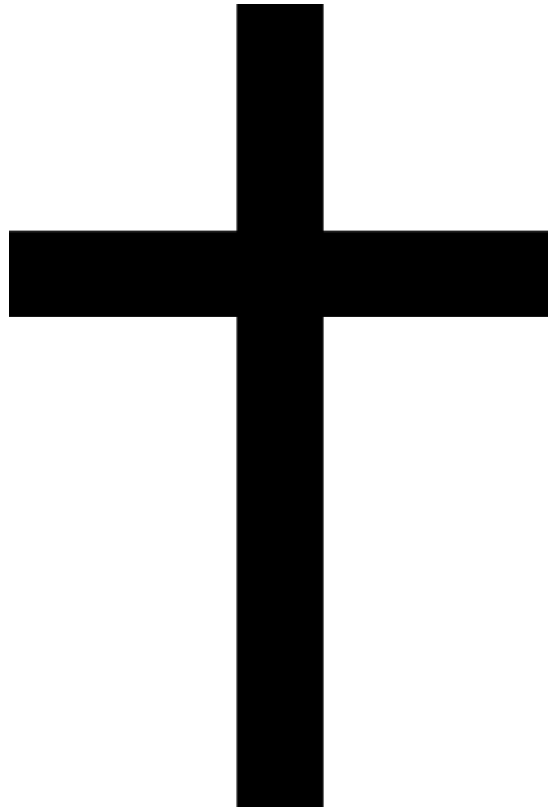


Churches Together in Kidlington

Good Friday



Walk of Witness

Welcome and Introduction at St John's

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

This is the day when life is raw, quivering, terrifying:
The day of numbed emotions, the day of blunt nails and splintered wood, of
bruised flesh and red blood.
The day we loathe, when hopes are crushed.
The day we long for, when pretences fall away—
Because the worst that we can do cannot kill the love of God.
Gracious God, your love is a light in our darkness, vulnerable, yet
unquenchable.
We would stand with Christ, in the midst of the horrors of this world where
betrayal and death constantly threaten your love and peace.

Scripture Reading: John 19:1-16.

O LORD MY GOD! when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works Thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed:

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze;

And when I think that God His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die—I scarce can take it in.
That on the cross my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin:

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home—what joy shall fill my heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration
And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!

2ND REFLECTION – St. Thomas More

JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

'So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to a place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha.'

(John.19:17-18)

In those days the condemned person was not put to death quickly and privately, but slowly and publicly. The aim was to discredit the person in the eyes of the people and if possible to destroy his soul as well as his body. Hence, Jesus was made to carry his cross through the streets of Jerusalem to the place of execution. Many who saw him and who knew nothing about him, would have presumed that he was getting what he deserved and would unthinkingly have joined in the public humiliation of him.

Jesus took up his cross. There is only one thing that can lighten such a cross. This one thing is love. Without love sacrifice is a heavy burden.

[Pause]

Reader: Again and again
we have bound you
and taken you captive, O Lord,

All Together: Because it's easier,
easier than facing the reality of what you ask of us.

Reader: Again and again you have been taken captive
and your voice silenced.

All Together: Again and again you have been dragged out
whenever it seems that quoting your name will justify
our attempts to gain what we want
at the expense of others.

HYMN. ON A HILL FAR AWAY

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

*So I'll cherish the old rugged cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross
And exchange it someday for a crown*

O, the old rugged cross, so despised by the world,
Has a wondrous attraction for me;
For the dear Lamb of God left his glory above
To bear it to dark Calvary.

In the old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,
A wondrous beauty I see;
for 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died
To pardon and sanctify me.

To the old rugged cross I will ever be true,
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Then He'll call me someday to my home far away,
When his glory for ever I'll share.

3RD REFLECTION – Methodist Church

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

'Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. And when they came to the place which is called The Skull, there they crucified him and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. " And they cast lots to divide his garments. (Luke 23:32-37).

Jesus was nailed to the cross. He hung there, unable to move hand or foot. He was utterly powerless. And yet, it was not the nails that held him there. He could have called on His Father at anytime, who would have sent angels to release him. Two things held Him on the cross. The first was His love for the world, for the people of the world, for you and me. The second was our sins. Let us confess our sins to God.

O God, you search us out and know us, and all that we are is open to you. We confess that we have sinned.

In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

When we entomb Christ in the pages of history and seal the joy of the Spirit behind the stone of our pride;

In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

When we search for the living in places of death and manufacture death in places of life:

In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

When we dismiss the bearers of good news and are loathe to touch the marks of truth:

In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

When we turn our backs on the way of freedom opening up to us, and trudge back to the bondage of the past.

In your mercy, Lord, forgive us and heal us.

We turn to you, O God of infinite mercy;

We renounce evil; We claim your love; We choose to be made whole

HYMN:

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when pierced him in the side?
Were you there when pierced him in the side?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

Were you there when God raised him from the tomb?
Were you there when God raised him from the tomb?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when God raised him from the tomb?

4TH REFLECTION – at the Bandstand: Baptist Church

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS **SCRIPTURE READING John 19:25-30**

It is possible for us, looking back, to understand why Jesus had to die. We know that He is the Lamb of God who took upon himself the sins of the world. We know that somehow, through His death, a doorway was opened into heaven.

It must have been much harder for his disciples and those he loved to make sense of it. Perhaps, even at the last moment, they thought that God would step in and rescue him. Their hopes were high, but then dashed.

He died praying. His last words were a prayer of abandonment to God: 'Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit.' Then he dropped his head and died.

It was as simple as that. One minute he was talking. Next minute he was silent.

Prayer

God, why did you let this happen,
why do our greatest hopes seem to flicker out and die?
We search for meaning in life and before we find it, it is gone.
We search for meaning in death but its horrible reality drives us back and
we are afraid to look.

God, we shudder at the way this life ended:
surrounded by cold brutality, rejected and betrayed by a friend,
deprived of justice, and loved by only a frightened few who watched in
fear. Inside we are afraid that this is all there is, a flickering light snuffed
out, no meaning, no future, no love. Evil triumphs yet again.

Evil triumphs so often. Yours was one of thousands of deaths. From those
times to now thousands die in loneliness and fear, victims of the cruelty
and oppression of this world.

Remind us with every death, that there is still so much to be done, before
love reigns and fear is driven away.

FINAL REFLECTION – The Village Centre. St Mary's

JESUS IS BURIED

Now that the body had been taken down from the cross, they had to decide what to do with it. The bodies of executed men were seldom buried. They were normally left out in the open to be eaten by the vultures. But the friends of Jesus saw to it that this would not happen to his body.

They decided to bury it. But where? It was then that a devout and good man, Joseph of Arimathea, came along with the offer of a tomb made from stone in a nearby garden.

It was a Jewish custom to wrap the bodies of the dead in linen cloths and also to put sweet spices between the folds of the cloths. It was Nicodemus, the same man who came to Jesus by night, who provided the cloths and spices.

They wrapped the body in the linen cloths and placed it in the tomb. It was not the kind of farewell they wanted to say. Everything had to be done quickly because the Sabbath rest began at sunset. Having rolled a large stone across the mouth of the tomb, they went away.

Prayer

Once again we don't want to face up
to what we have done.

We quickly seek to clean up the mess,
to hide the evidence, to get life normal again.

We want it finished and the body put out of sight.

And yet that broken body, if we would only face it is the evidence of the
love we crave and the source of the healing we cry for.

Give us courage to see beyond the blood and the horror.

Give us the hope that in this death
we may find our own life.

1. 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 price.
2. 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.
3. 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?
4. 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.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord we have come to walk the way of the cross, to share in your sufferings and the sufferings of your world. Grant that we may offer our lives to you and become living sacrifices walking the way of justice, peace and love in the power of your spirit. Amen.

We go in sorrow, we look to Easter and await the light.

We go in peace.

The Peace of the Lord be with us all.

Amen.

You are all welcome to refreshments at the Methodist Church Hall

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