

At the Cross...

Gathering

Create a space for worship - perhaps with a small table with a bible, cross and candle.

*This week, it would be appropriate to find a **black cloth** or scarf for this special day.*

Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God

Gathering

Today we remember the story of Jesus' arrest and death. It is not an easy story to hear. But always we are reminded that we are held in the embrace of Love's self.

And so as we begin, we light a candle to affirm, to remind ourselves, that Jesus Christ is the light of the world, and that this light shines in even the darkest places.

Light candle

Acknowledgement of Country

The Ancient of Days, [God the Creator], breathed life into this Land and her Peoples. From time beyond our reckoning the Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal nation have blessed this place through their care and concern.

We pay our respects to their Elders and Leaders, past and present and emerging, and we pray for the future of their communities.

May we walk gently and respectfully on this Land.

*(c) 2017, A.Koh-Butler,
This land is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here.and walk with them.*

We gather on this Good Friday at the foot of the cross
which calls us on, not in shame, not in fear
but more deeply into the costly journey towards life.
There is wounding,
there is weeping.
In Jesus Christ, God is not separated from that.

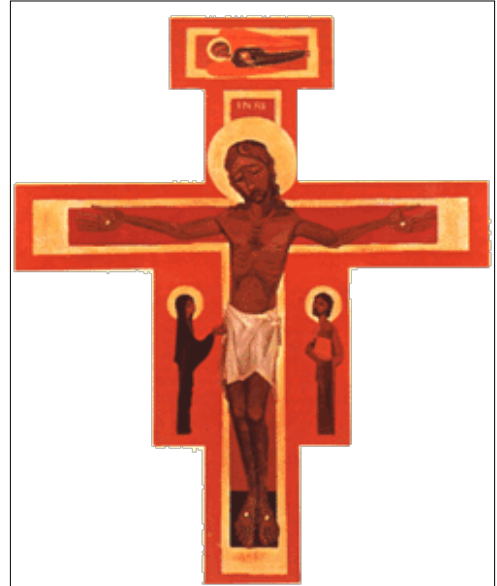
D. McRae-McMahon

Call to Worship

The prophet Isaiah said:

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 no account of him.

Isaiah 53:3



What makes this day good?
If you have ever believed that love inevitably leads to betrayal,
this day says it doesn't.
If you have ever believed that some people are unlovable, irredeemable,
this day says they aren't.
If you have ever believed that there is a limit to forgiveness,
this day says there isn't.
If you have ever believed you aren't worth saving,
this day says you are.
If you have ever believed that you don't deserve freedom,
this day says you do.
If you have ever believed that fear, anger, hate and despair will always win,
this day say they won't.
And this day is good for you.

Cheryl Lawrie, Hold This Space Pocket Liturgies, 2008, Proost, p.118-9

Prayer

Let's pray...
Bless us, O God, as we gather in this space made sacred by your presence and our own.
We thank you for our lives, with all their richness.
We thank you for our friendships.
We ask for understanding when life seems dark and full of fear, and we shrink from embracing it.
Help us to accept those with whom relationships seem difficult or impossible.
Help us to embrace those we do not understand.
Remind us of the seed in the deep, dark earth.
It is in this darkness that life begins to stir, where movement into growth occurs, and not till then can the plant move into the light.
Help us to remember this when we find ourselves surrounded by our dark night.
Guide us towards the light and love of Christ. Amen.

Sing - Who Is This Man (tune: Londonderry Air)

Let's stand and sing a question that asks us to consider who it is whose passion and death we remember today...

Who is this man, who gathered people
to him,
and touched their lives along each dusty
way;
who spoke to all with passion and with
peacefulness
And valued all their ordinary days?
Who is this man, who at the long day's
ending,
would draw apart to wait on God and
pray,
and, in that mystery that knows no
ending,
would find God's wisdom and would
know God's words to say?

Who is this man, who gave to women
dignity
in partnership of worth and equal grace,
who listened to the stories that they told
him,
and honoured each whatever was their
place?
Who let them choose to come and join
his company,
and learned with them God's love for
every race,
who showed to each the courage of their
nature
to care and tend each lonely and
suffering face?

Who is this man, who spoke to men of gentleness
and showed them all the children at his side,
who taught of love and justice for all people,
and took a towel and washed away their pride?
In him they saw the strength of truth and mercy,
and how he trusted God to be his guide;
knew how he led them through misunderstanding,
and then forgave them when they ran away to hide.

Who is this man, who calls us now to follow,
a shadow presence asking us to be companions of the way through this life's journey,
to live in truth, to set our tired world free?
So let us find each other now in partnership,
with ears to hear and eyes awake to see,
that we might grow in grace and understanding
and walk beside that man who comes from Galilee.

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Prayer

Lord God,
on this most difficult of days we come to the foot of the cross.
We come not because we want to but because we must.
Here we join Mary and the other women,
the disciple Jesus loved,
the soldiers,
and all those who came as spectators.
We come and hear those words "it is finished".
And we weep.
We weep as those who love Jesus,
just as you love Jesus.
And as countless others have loved him.
Today is not a day for rejoicing but for joining in mourning
for all that hangs on that cross:
Jesus, your Son;
Jesus, our Saviour;
Jesus, our Redeemer.
We acknowledge that it was the sinful actions of humanity that placed him there.
Not some kind of quid pro quo deal,
but an act of love,
giving of himself,
that we can return to time and time again.
Forgive us that we need to do so,
that our actions today, as then, still harm and hurt and isolate.
Forgive us that we still have not learned to live as Jesus lived.
Thank you, Lord,
that on a day like today
we are reminded of the depth of your love for us.
a love that has no limits,
a love that hangs on that awful cross. Your love.
Amen.

Spill The Beans, Issue 42, resources for Good Friday, p.83

Listening for God's Voice

Today we hear the story of Jesus' arrest and death in its entirety.

It is broken up into sections and after each section, there will be a time of silence and then a prayer and/or a sung response.

Join in where you can or ponder and pray as you need.

Betrayal

Reading: John 18:1-14

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. ²Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. ³So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. ⁴Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, 'For whom are you looking?' ⁵They answered, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus replied, 'I am he.' Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. ⁶When Jesus said to them, 'I am he', they stepped back and fell to the ground. ⁷Again he asked them, 'For whom are you looking?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' ⁸Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.' ⁹This was to fulfil the word that he had spoken, 'I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me.' ¹⁰Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. ¹¹Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?'

¹² So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year.

¹⁴Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

Reflection

Betrayal comes in disguise - here, in the kiss of a friend.

A friend's betrayal - perhaps the deepest hurt of all.

When we betray another's trust, it hurts us all.

God, before you we name the times we have betrayed you
times we have betrayed a friend, a co-worker, a neighbour
either through our words or actions,
or by our silence?

Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.

Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.

Denial

Reading: John 18:15-18

¹⁵ Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷The woman said to Peter, 'You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?' He said, 'I am not.' ¹⁸Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing round it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

Prayer

Sometimes it is just easier to pretend we know nothing...
Sometimes it is easier to pretend we are not involved...
God, help us to find the courage to stand with our friends,
to stand with people who are vulnerable or being bullied,
to name ourselves with you, O Christ?

*Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*

Accused

Reading: John 18:19-24

¹⁹ Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. ²⁰ Jesus answered, 'I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. ²¹ Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said.' ²² When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, 'Is that how you answer the high priest?' ²³ Jesus answered, 'If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?' ²⁴ Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Reflection

Starkly visible in our world is the voice of religion when it betrays God and leads people into judgment of others;
words and acts of violence against people who are different that come from entrenched positions of privilege;
the sounds of the power of money,
and of greed beyond description;
the exploitation of the powerless
and temptations to endless consumption;
the shrieks of pain and fear in war and violence.
Whether spoken or silent, our complicity...

*Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*

Denial (again)

Reading: John 18:25-27

²⁵ Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, 'You are not also one of his disciples, are you?' He denied it and said, 'I am not.' ²⁶ One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, 'Did I not see you in the garden with him?' ²⁷ Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

Prayer

Denying who we are is a deep betrayal.
Denying who you are cuts us to the core.
As the pressure mounts, O God, strengthen our resolve
to stand with Jesus and the way that he shows.

*Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*

Questioned and Traded

Reading: John 18:28-40

²⁸ Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹So Pilate went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this man?' ³⁰They answered, 'If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.' ³¹Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.' The Jews replied, 'We are not permitted to put anyone to death.' ³²(This was to fulfil what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

³³ Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' ³⁴Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' ³⁵Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' ³⁶Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' ³⁷Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.' ³⁸Pilate asked him, 'What is truth?'

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, 'I find no case against him. ³⁹But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' ⁴⁰They shouted in reply, 'Not this man, but Barabbas!' Now Barabbas was a bandit.

Prayer

Powerful people blame each other,
they accuse others when they feel threatened.

Truth becomes an after-thought, collateral damage in the desperate bid for power.

Why worry about what is true or right, when a bargain can be done?

We, too, get too easily drawn into questionable politics where truth seems no longer relevant.

God of truth, help us to stay focused on you and your way of Love.

Give us courage to speak your truth - always.

Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.

Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.

Mocked

Reading: John 19:1-7

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ²And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. ³They kept coming up to him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him on the face. ⁴Pilate went out again and said to them, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.' ⁵So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!' ⁶When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.' ⁷The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.'

Prayer

It is easy to mock when we do not understand.

It is easy to mock when someone is different.
It is easy to mock when they are not talking about me.
It is easy to mock when we are part of a crowd.

*Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*

Condemned

Reading: John 19:8-16

⁸ Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. ⁹He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, 'Where are you from?' But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰Pilate therefore said to him, 'Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?' ¹¹Jesus answered him, 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.' ¹²From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, 'If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.'

¹³ When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. ¹⁴Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, 'Here is your King!' ¹⁵They cried out, 'Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but the emperor.' ¹⁶Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

Prayer

Ahh "the law" - we'll apply it when it suits us,
and we will avoid it to protect ourselves.
With power comes responsibility.
But when loud voices apply pressure,
it is easy, once again, to give in to the crowd.

*Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*

Crucified

Reading: John 19:16-25

So they took Jesus; ¹⁷and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. ¹⁸There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. ¹⁹Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' ²⁰Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. ²¹Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews", but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews." ' ²²Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.' ²³When 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. ²⁴So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfil what the scripture says, 'They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.' ²⁵And that is what the soldiers did.

Prayer

And so Jesus carries his cross.

He is stripped.

And is lifted up.

For all to see.

“The King of the Jews”.

The soldiers gamble amongst themselves for his clothes.

When have we scrambled for what is left, picked over the bones of someone else’s misfortune?

Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.

Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.

Died

Reading: John 19:25-30

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’

²⁷Then he said to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

²⁸ After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), ‘I am thirsty.’ ²⁹A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. ³⁰When Jesus had received the wine, he said, ‘It is finished.’ Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Reflection

The women remain around him.

He entrusts his mother into the care of another.

He loves and is loved.

As we find the courage to enter the darkness,
the cross rises before us.

It is hard to watch but we are compelled to look at this cross of human deadliness.

Jesus the Christ has moved into all human life.

We are never, ever, left alone.

Extinguish the Candle

This candle burns during our services to remind us of the presence of the Christ who is the light of the world. Today is the only day when that candle is extinguished deliberately

to remind us that Jesus died our death, his life was given up.

The disciples were alone...

Peace

May the peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Reflection

While Good Friday is at the heart of Christian faith, it is at the same time one of the most difficult for us to comprehend and explain.

The death of anyone is hard. The death of an innocent man, somehow for our sake, is even harder.

What we need to understand is that the way the events are described in the gospels, and explained in the New Testament all use different symbols and give different emphases which produces a rich tapestry of meaning for us to explore all of which point to love which is beyond our capacity to capture in words or even images, a love that will go to the uttermost end, beyond even life itself, to embrace us and set us free.

Let me give you three snippets to contemplate today and through the weekend...

1. Passover is about freedom

John places Jesus death at a different time to the other gospels. Where Matthew, Mark and Luke put an emphasis on Jesus celebrating the Passover meal, John, places the last meal Jesus shares with his disciples a little earlier in the week so that Jesus dies at the same time the lambs are being slaughtered for the Passover meal. Each of the gospel writers make this clear link between Passover and Jesus' death - but in different ways.

The important thing for us to think about and remember is that the blood that is shed at Passover has nothing to do with the forgiveness of sin or God requiring a sacrifice as some sort of payment. Passover has everything to do with the protection of the people of Israel from God's judgment and the promise of freedom and a new life in the land God has promised.

2. Atonement is about reconciliation

Let me be clear - the idea that Jesus is somehow payment for our sin to a violent, vengeful God - is simply not found in the gospel stories.

What is found is a recognition that all of us have become separated from, or alienated from God. Jesus says it often enough, "Repent" - change your thinking and turn your life towards God.

"The reason atonement is necessary, is because atonement doesn't necessarily mean all this stuff about blood and guilt and violence. Atonement, literally in English, just means reconciliation. It is the "at-one-ment" of God and humanity. We need atonement because we are alienated from one another and alienated from God."

Rev Andrew McGowan

By The Well, Podcast, C117 - Good Friday, <https://bythewell.com.au/episodes/>

In fact, the reconciliation God seeks goes even further - it is the reconciliation of all creation - all things living - so reconciliation between us and God, your personal relationship with God; reconciliation between each other, sorting out our differences here across humanity; and reconciliation with all of creation, finding a way to co-exist and to live in relationship with the animals, birds, plants, lands and oceans of God's making that enables all to flourish. "God so loved the world", in the Greek, the *cosmos*, "that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16).

3. God's glory on the cross is about God's presence

Let me also be clear - the death of Jesus is not so that we can go to heaven after we die. It is all about God coming amongst us and being present with us even in the midst of our darkest moments, even when we make a hash of our lives.

When the Bible talks about the glory of God, it is describing the radiant presence of God. This thing about Jesus being "glorified" on the cross is about us seeing and experiencing the God of all Creation - in that moment - of complete betrayal, denial, humiliation, brokenness and death - God-with-us, Emmanuel.

The transformation that is promised is not so we can go to some other place after we die - we are already held in Eternal Love. It is about God coming amongst us, about God's way, God's realm, God's kingdom being a present reality in our lives and in the world around us.

So as we gaze on Jesus, hanging from a cross, buried in a borrowed tomb, to where does our heart go?

It certainly rests with our own grief - for those we have loved and lost, for the brokenness of the world around us: our own relationships, the violence and troubles of the world at large. It rests with the violence of this death and the injustice perpetrated here - and it rests with the violence and injustice still perpetrated by powerful people today.

And it rests in the unfathomable depths of the love of God - holding us, staying with us - in all our messiness, hoping with us for a new day that will see the transformation of the world and all its peoples.

Responding

Sing - When I Survey The Wondrous Cross (TIS 342)

We sing a hymn that asks us - of all that we have heard of this story, this person Jesus Christ, this God - how might we respond?

What does it ask of us? "My soul, my life, my all..."

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.

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?

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.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small:
love so amazing, so divine
demands my soul, my life, my all.

*Words: Isaac Watts
Public Domain*

Buried

Reading: John 19:31-42

³¹ 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. ³² Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. ³⁵ (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) ³⁶ These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'None of his bones shall be broken.' ³⁷ And again another passage of scripture says, 'They will look on the one whom they have pierced.'

³⁸ After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. ³⁹ Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰ They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹ Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴² And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

For the Word of God in Scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us,
Thanks be to God!

And so we gently bind the wounds of living.
We cover our pain, our grieving, our unforgiven failures - with the love of Christ.
We cover the injustices and rejections of the world.
We cover the violence of the world.
We cover the struggling life of our planet - with the love of the Christ.

Like the friends of Jesus in his day,
we will gently cherish the Christ.
We will lay down the difficulties of life.
We bring these burdens to this, the Body of Christ,
for healing, comfort, forgiveness, and new life in the future.
We will place it into the tomb of love and care.
Silence

Affirmation of Faith

You might like to join me as we make a statement about the God we believe:

***We believe in God who always surprises us,
who creates life from death,
who brings good out of evil,
who leads us from despair to hope.***

***We believe in God who is faithful to us,
who shows mercy when we run away,
who shows patience when we deny the truth,
who gives reconciling love when we betray.***

***We believe in Christ Jesus who lived and died as one of us,
to take the fear out of living and dying,
to open our eyes to death, within us and around us,
and open our hearts to new ways of living.***

***We believe in God who forgives us,
who sets us free from past grief and failure
and calls us into a new day.***

Dorothy McRae-McMahon

Epilogue

And so the cross,
that tree of shame –
How beautiful it once was,
covered in autumn gold,
but hate's winter has set in
and rotted away all life.
It stretches there
like some gargoyle of shame,
waiting for its bearer,
who has carried it long enough.

And haunting its starkness
are all the words of love
but even they do not soften it.

What good is it now to sing words of love?
What irony to speak of hope?
But it is the only good there is,
for here
in the shadow of this cruel love
such words still make sense,
and this week of all weeks,
we must sing with faith,
talk of hope,
and long eagerly
for the dawn,
for this last irony,
is the beginning of love.

Seasons of the Spirit, Resources for Palm Sunday, 10 April 2022, p.82

Prayer for Ourselves and Others

Lord God,
today is a reminder of your love for us.
No matter who we are, what we have done, nothing can break that bond.
In a world where many carry a cross of one description or another,
we bring our prayers for that world to you.
For those whose bodies are failing, and death is not far away,
we pray.
For those weighed down by grief, whether recent or revisited,
we pray.
For those who fear the future, uncertain of what will unfold, we pray.
For those who face prejudice in any of its many forms,
we pray.
For those who carry the guilt of causing pain and damage, we pray.
For those who see no end to physical or mental health problems, we pray.
For our part in the destruction of your creation,
we pray.
Thank you, our God,
that we can bring all of this to you.
As we sit at the foot of the cross may this time serve as a reminder of your continued and
relentless love for us, whoever we are, wherever we are.

Spill The Beans, Issue 42, Resources for Good Friday, p.84

Living God,
if only we did what we could,
how different our lives and our world might be?
Suppose we fed the stranger,
and worked for peace.
Imagine if we healed the sick,
or treated them humanely.
Suppose we forgave those who hurt us,
and learned to see people as friends rather than enemies.

Imagine if we loved more and hated less.
Suppose we showed mercy,
rather than expected to get what we feel is ours.
If we could do what we could,
we would make the world a better place.
We would make our community more welcoming,
our country more accepting,
our world more peaceful.
If we could do what we could,
we might praise God more,
say our prayers frequently,
read the scriptures regularly,
share our own gospel experiences willingly.
If we could do what we could,
we would carry on your Kingdom building,
we would be doing the will of God today,
we would be the men and woman God wants us to be.
So, Holy God,
there is nothing stopping us,
doing what we could do for you.
No excuses we can make,
no reasons we can give for doing nothing,
so be in us today,
so that we can be you in the world,
and may the name of Jesus Christ be honoured and praised. Amen.

Spill The Beans, Issue 42, Resources for Easter Saturday, p.91

Sending

Sending

There is a tradition that Good Friday is the first part of a service that extends across the 3 days of Easter.

So today there is no blessing, no Amen, just words of encouragement and an invitation to gather again next time.

And so we go from this place, to wait...
We sit with the reality of who we are
and we wait for the revealing of who God is for us.
And until we meet again on Sunday morning,
Go gently, go slowly,
Go in the embrace of Divine Love and Grace.