

# St Nicholas Church Sighthill

online (Zoom)

## Good Friday Service



**Were you there when they crucified my Lord?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MI9V8owRTA4>

We come together now to meditate on the cross.

Tonight, we follow Jesus of Nazareth from the Passover Supper, through the darkness of Gethsemane to Golgotha and the Tomb. We gather at the foot of the cross to hear of Jesus suffering; to hear Christ speak to us from His agony.

Good Friday evening Service  
(15 April 2022)

**'Via Dolorosa with Christ'**

Today, our minds turn to the suffering of Jesus; a suffering that culminated into His death on the cross at Calvary. For some, the cross is simply a shiny bling-bling object. Others use it as a label to identify them or the religious group they belong to. But for all Christians; for all disciples of Christ, the cross of Christ is an extremely powerful symbol. It is our sign of hope. It exists to orient us, to direct us and to transform our relationship with God, other people and God's creation.

**It was at the cross of Christ that the painful separation from God was effectively replaced by intimacy and joy; and because of that same cross, we obtained a new and indeed enriched self-understanding. Now, wherever we are because of the fall, we must deny, and wherever we are because of creation, we must affirm. And this new self-understanding should produce self-sacrifice in terms of our worship of God and service to others.**

And [as I look up to the cross] when I think that God, His son not sparing, sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in. [But I am forever grateful] that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, He bled and died to take away my sin. 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...

## **Bible Reading: Matthew 27.27-31**

Then Pilate's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's palace, and the whole company gathered around him. They stripped off his clothes and put a scarlet robe on him. Then they made a crown out of thorny branches and placed it on his head, and put a stick in his right hand; then they knelt before him and made fun of him. **"Long live the King of the Jews!"** they said. They spat on him, and took the stick and hit him over the head. When they had finished making fun of him, they took the robe off and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.



<https://thinktheology.org/2019/12/27/jesus-trial-before-pilate-follow-me-part-71/>

## **Invitation for Reflections**

Today, we want to reflect on the unstoppable, persistent love of Jesus. We want to remember the immeasurable love that he has embraced in his very being for everyone, from the beginning.

- a love that led to a cruel, torturous cross.
- a love that is hard to express,
- a kind of love that is hard to put into words
- a love that has the astounding ability to change our life on earth and a love that changes our eternal life
- a kind of love that causes us to bow in holy reverence and awe.

Today, we stop to reflect on this far-reaching, outlandish love and remember Jesus' blood, his body... his sacrifice!!

## **Prayer**

Mysterious God, eternal and wise, we come to you confused and uncertain.

We stand at the foot of the cross, the cross where Jesus, your Son, died, a lonely painful death, a death that reveals the depth of your love for us.

(pause)

We come this evening to remember: to remember that your love overcomes death; that your love is greater than our hate; that your love can restore all things.

(pause)

Forgive us, O God, for those times when we forsake you, when we leave you dying on the cross and turn away from you.

(pause)

Forgive us, O God, for those times when we ignore the suffering all around us and choose instead the way of selfish indulgence.

(pause)

God of grace and mercy, forgive us and renew us, give us strength and courage to carry our cross each day to put self behind and others first. May we die to self that you might live through us. In the name of the risen one we pray. Amen.

## **Reading Matthew 27.32-44**

As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene named Simon, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. They came to a place called Golgotha, which means, "The Place of the Skull." There they offered Jesus wine mixed with a bitter substance; but after tasting it, he would not drink it. They crucified him and then divided his clothes among them by throwing dice. After that they sat there and watched him. Above his head they put the written notice of the accusation against him: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Then they crucified two bandits with Jesus, one on his right and the other on his left.

(Pause)

People passing by shook their heads and hurled insults at Jesus: "You were going to tear down the Temple and build it back up in three days! Save yourself if you are God's Son! Come on down from the cross!"

In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and the elders made fun of him: "He saved others, but he cannot save himself! Isn't he the

king of Israel? If he will come down off the cross now, we will believe in him! He trusts in God and claims to be God's Son. Well, then, let us see if God wants to save him now!" Even the bandits who had been crucified with him insulted him in the same way.

### **Hymn: Man of Sorrows, what a name!**

[https://youtu.be/ z3wuwhQP6Q](https://youtu.be/z3wuwhQP6Q)

## **Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane - What was my Saviour thinking?**

Even Jesus reflected on what it would be like to say the yes's of yes to his Father's plan for him. When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, he had to go through the process of giving complete, willing submission. What was he thinking? What was he feeling deep within, when he said to his disciples, "my soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me?" What was Jesus inwardly wrestling with the first time he, in excruciating agony, talked to his Father, "if it is possible, please save me from this time of great pain." Or the second time, returning to clarify his willing heart with his Father, "but Father, I do not ask you to do what I want. Do what you want for me." And yet a third exchange with his Father, "if this cup cannot be taken away, unless I drink it, your will be done!"

Was Jesus thinking about the worse thing that could possibly happen; in that, His Father would turn his back on him because of the horrid, unholy, disgusting sin he would carry? Oh, the unbearable loneliness in that moment being separated from His Father!! Was he wondering if the people he loved immensely would understand his heart for them, would they live their lives in ceaseless gratitude? Would they understand the abundant life they could have? When he died, when he went through that suffocating darkness, when he would go – what then?

### **Video – Jesus' Reflections – "When I Go"**

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

## **Concluding reflection and closing prayer**

Jesus on the cross does not look down except to extend forgiveness for what we have not yet done. Jesus on the cross does not look around him expect to see who might like to join him in His great adventure of grace.

Jesus on the cross does not look below, expect to gather those he loves into spiritual community. Jesus – hangs in agony – on the rugged Roman cross – hurt by the silence of his creator. He thirsts....



He thirst for life, for love, to continue to be a part of the great process of love and life that is God. Jesus on the cross, thirsts past his dying to where he will be reunited, refreshed, reborn

And here is his loveliness, here is his beauty, here is his perfection. To borrow from the immortal words of Stevie Wonder.

Isn't he lovely, surely the angel's best, We should be so happy, we have been heaven blessed, I can't believe what God has done, he's given us this one, whose so very lovely, made in love.

May we all be granted the grace to follow in the way of thirst, and to reach beyond our parched selves to the oasis that is wholeness in the other and fulfillment in the divine.

### **Join me in Prayer**

Dear Lord Jesus, Judas betrayed you in the garden,  
But we have all betrayed you, and continue to do so even today....

Peter denied you, and so too, we deny you in the living out of our lives....forgetting your way of love and compassion, even as we know it to be right and true....

We like to think that we would be the ones to stay true and strong and faithful and good. But the truth is, we forsake you, we betray you, we are a part and a parcel of an economy and a society that spits in your face, and laughs at the perfect justice of your cross. Forgive us.

But you have remained true and faithful to us. Your forgiveness abounds. Your generosity astonishes. Your mercy is beyond our comprehension. You have remained faithful to God, to us, to your way of love.

There you are stretched out on the cross, arms wide open to the world, heart fully open to God, in your last breath granting grace and forgiveness to all.....

Strengthen us, that we might be faithful too, not turning aside, not turning away, not betraying you or denying you, but following you through the sunlight and through the shadow, for you have claimed the final victory over evil and darkness with your gentle way and your humble spirit.

May we be worthy followers, and steadfast friends, leaning upon your council and seeking out the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in all things.

Let us stand at the foot of your cross and turning our hearts to God, stretch out our loving and holy spirits to embrace the world....knowing our safety and our joy lies with you as we say together the prayer that you taught us so many years ago.....

**Jesus keep me near the cross**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xrmlv8o6bGM>**

## **Closing Prayer**

He carried the cross even as soldiers mocked and maimed him and poured scorn as freely as his blood. He carried the cross even as Simon lifted it from his torn shoulders and the crowd saw glint of bone. He carried the cross even as he hung in agony and tasted the bitterness of wine and waging.

He carried the cross even as the devil taunted and tested and offered a way out. He carried the cross even as darkness cast its shadow and the earth shook as if the dead walked upon it. He carried the cross even as women and warrior wept and wondered at the waste. He carries the cross even as the world waits for all sin and sorrow to be laid down for all time.

(pause)

Lord Jesus, your greatest gift to us was to live the way of love no matter what, even when it led to a horrible, painful death, that we might see how much God loves us.

(pause)

May we understand that you call us to die to our selfish wants and desires so that we might care for others.

(pause)

May we take up our cross tonight, and listen to your voice calling us to love and care for the people in our world.

(pause)

O God, direct us in your way. May we follow you and be faithful to our calling. Walk with us and never forsake us as we carry our cross and reveal your kingdom here on earth, today and always, Amen.

**Final hymn: When I survey the wondrous cross**  
**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqgmgeuZ1E4>**

## **Benediction**

Lead us, O God, to a new realm. To look towards the light.  
To let go of fear and hear you calling again. To travel the difficult path of  
the cross, knowing that you travel with us.  
Help us Father hear you calling to us.

Come, follow, walk the way. And we will follow you Father on the  
journey into the light. Amen