

10th April 2020



Good Friday Worship Service

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Come those of you,
who do not know what brought you here.
Come those of you,
who are looking for answers.
Come those of you who could do no other

GREETING

We come here today to remember a man.
A man...who had dreams,
who had those dreams shattered,
who needed time to think and pray,
who knew he was likely to die for what he believed...

A man of extraordinary religious insight.
A man who did die - a cruel death.

On this day we look at the cross, and we remember...
the betrayal of friendship and its consequences,
the casual cruelty of Roman authority and execution,
and how unreliable others proved to be in a crisis.

On this day may we also remember
that religious bigotry, cruelty and unreliability
are still a part of our everyday lives.

On this day, then, may we learn some new precepts for living...
do not avoid contact with suffering,
or close your eyes before suffering;
do not maintain anger or hatred;
do not say untruthful things for the sake of personal interest, or to impress
people;
do not live with a vocation that is harmful to humans and nature...

On this day we remember

OPENING SENTENCES

In hope, in longing:

We're glad to come together.

In solidarity with those who struggle:

We're glad to come together.

In resistance to those who dominate:

We're glad to come together.

In memory of Jesus, who lived with compassion:

We're glad to come together.

In memory of all who act with courage:

We're glad to come together.

J Nelson-Pallmeyer

We Listen For God's Word

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Isa 52:13-53:12 See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. 14 Just as there were many who were astonished at him --so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals-- 15 so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate. 53:1 Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? 2 For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3 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 him of no account. 4 Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 8 By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. 9 They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. 11 Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

PSALM 22:

Jesus spoke the opening words of Psalm 22 from the cross.
As we hear the Psalm, let us reflect on the loneliness and pain Jesus experienced on the cross.

My God, my God, why do you desert me?
I cry desperately for help, but it does not come!
 I feel more like a worm than a person!
 I feel scorned and abused by everyone.
 They make fun of me!
They stick out their tongues and sneer. ,
They say to me: "If God cares for you,
why doesn't God help you.
 Like a pack of dogs, evil people close in on me!
 They surround me and tear at my hands and feet!
I can count my bones! They can all be seen!
My enemies look at me and stare! They gloat over me!
They gamble for my clothes and divide them among themselves.
 Come quickly to help me! Stay close to me, O God,
 and I will praise your power to all people!
In the midst of the congregation, I will praise you!
 Let all the people of God worship and praise God!

The Reproaches

...O people of God,
what has God done to offend us?
 Most holy, most holy,
 We hear you, we hear you.
 Have mercy upon us.
 O save us and help us.

FIRST REPROACH:

John 18:1-9 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. 2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. 3 So 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. 4 Then Jesus, knowing all



that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" 5 They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. 6 When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. 7 Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." 8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." 9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me."

...O people of God,
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REFLECTION 1

I remember a man who had dreams of what might be:
that people would be set free from ideas and images
about God that enslaved them,
that people would believe that through their
everyday acts of human kindness they are
intimately connected with the sacred,
that people would live
'in peace, in God's presence all the days of their lives'

I remember a man driven by his dreams.

First candle is extinguished



SECOND REPROACH

John 18:10-11 Then 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. 11 Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

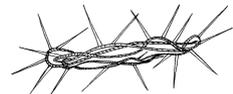
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REFLECTION 2

I remember a man who had his moments of breakthrough,
when it must have seemed his dream was being realised:
the times people really listened and responded,
the men and women who were prepared
to walk with him and support him,
times when he spoke better and more convincingly than other times.
I remember a man enthused by his successes.

Second candle is extinguished



THIRD REPROACH:

John 18:15-18 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, 16 but 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. 17 The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." 18 Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

John 18:25-27 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.

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REFLECTION 3

I remember a man who learned of the cruel death of his cousin.

He got into a boat, seeking a lonely place,
where he could be with his friends
to absorb the shock,
to grieve quietly,
and to calm the feelings of powerlessness and frustration
and fear for his own future.

I wonder what he prayed about that night?
I wonder what helped him leave that lonely place
and go forward to confront life,
rather than retreat into isolation and safety?
I remember a man driven by his convictions.

Third candle is extinguished



FOURTH REPROACH:

John 18:33-38 Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" 34 Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" 35 Pilate 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?" 36 Jesus 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." 37 Pilate 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." 38 Pilate 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.

...O people of God,
what has God done to offend us?

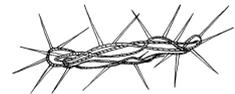
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REFLECTION 4

I remember a man whose dream was shattered:
who broke down and cried over what could have been,
who knew the pain of failure and powerlessness,
who knew what it was like to feel broken and terribly alone.

I remember someone human like all of us.

Fourth candle is extinguished



FIFTH REPROACH:

John 19:1-6 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. 2 And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. 3 They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. 4 Pilate 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." 5 So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" 6 When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; "

O people of God,
what has God done to offend us?

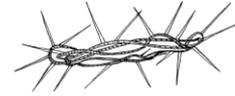
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REFLECTION 5

I remember a man who knew he was going to die:
who gathered with his friends
knowing it was for the last time,
who spoke to them about what he really believed,
who wanted them to remember him
and to keep his dream alive.

I remember a testament to love.

Fifth candle is extinguished



SIXTH REPROACH:

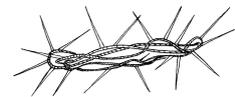
John 19:7-16a The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God." 8 Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. 9 He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 Pilate 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?" 11 Jesus 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." 12 From 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. 14 Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" 15 They 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." 16 Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

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REFLECTION 6

I remember a man crucified.
He was a failure, abandoned by his male friends, taunted, despised,
enduring a shameful and agonising death,
no consoling or heartfelt presence of his God to help him.
I remember a man whose faith in all he believed was tested to the limits.

SEVENTH REPROACH:



John 19:16-19 So they took Jesus; 17 and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. 19 Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

John 19:23-25 When 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. 24 So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." 25 And that is what the soldiers did.

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Seventh candle is extinguished

EIGHTH REPROACH:



John 19:25b-29 Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." 27 Then 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 fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." 29 A 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.

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REFLECTION 7

I remember a man of extraordinary religious insight:
utterly convinced of the connectedness
between human loving and living in God,
determined to give people personal authority
in their relationship with God,
wanting to set people free from fear of the unknown,
setting his heart on breaking down barriers between people...

We give thanks for the ways in which the
life, teaching, and death of Jesus,
have set us free.

Jesus provides a glimpse into another this-world reality.
His vision is worth exploring.
For I am encouraged to celebrate life,
to suck the marrow out of existence, to explore, and probe,
and experiment, to venture into uncharted seas,
without fear of a tyrannical and vindictive God.
He does not set limits on my curiosity... *(Adapt.RFunk/hj)*

CLOSING PRAYER

It is now time for us to leave this place in silence.
Let us commend ourselves into the care of God.

In God, Source of Life

our deaths are not the final word,
our moments of crisis are part of eternal possibility,
and our weakness is taken up
into the courage of God.

As followers of Jesus of the Way,

our humanness is touched with divine life,
our tears are mingled with longing love,
and our solidarity with those who suffer
is joined by divine presence.

In the Spirit of Creativity,

there are no boundaries on the dream,
there is no end to hope,
and we will never live
beyond the cherishing of God.

(Adapt/DMcRae-McMahon/bst)

The Seven Last Words Of Christ On The Cross:

- "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."
Luke 23:32-34.
- "Woman, here is your son!... Here is your mother!"
John 19:25-27
- "Truly, I say today you will be with me in paradise."
Luke 23:39-43
- "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
Matthew 27:45-46
- "I am thirsty."
John 19:28-29
- "It is finished."
John 19:30
- "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."
Luke 23:44-46

