



Wychwood Benefice

Good Friday Walk

1st Station. Mark 15:1-5, 11-15

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' He answered him, 'You say so.' Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, 'Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.' But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, 'Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?' They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!' So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Thought

Pilate asked what crime Jesus had committed. It was a good question. Jesus had annoyed the religious leader, of that there was no doubt. He had been critical of social and religious structures. He had healed the villagers; he had told stories to the crowds; he was probably a threat to public law and order; but was that enough to condemn him, to end his life? But he would not defend himself – the storyteller was silent now and the crowd was noisy, and Pilate handed him over to be crucified.

Prayer

For those on trial this week and for those appointed to judge them: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

2nd Station Mark 15:16-20

The soldiers took Jesus inside, to the courtyard of the governor's palace and called together the rest of the company. They put a purple robe on Jesus, made a crown out of thorn branches, and put it on his head. Then they began to salute him: 'Long live the King of the Jews.'

They beat him over the head with a stick, spat on him, fell on their knees and bowed to him. When they had finished mocking him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Thought

Soldiers taking the chance for a bit of fun. They had a heavy day ahead. Soon they would have to put on their public face – disciplined, controlled, efficient. But for now a bit of a lark with the lads with no risk of recrimination. Dead men tell no stories, and Jesus was going to his death.

Prayer

For those appointed to keep public order, and for those tempted to abuse their power: Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

3rd Station Isaiah 53:1

Who would have believed what we now tell?

Who could have seen God's hand in this?

Thought

Jesus was exhausted. He was in pain. He was going to his death. The cross was heavy and he fell. He was flesh and blood like us, he was struggling.

Prayer

For those who are tired or in pain:

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

4th Station Luke 2:22,25,34,35

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

Thought

Mary was going to be there at his end – she who had been there with God at his beginning, She was his mother.

She fed him and cradled him and watched over his growing. Whatever he had said and done, he was still her son and she would not desert him now.

Whatever pain of his she could embrace she would. And in the meeting of their eyes there was love, suffering and shining.

Prayer

For parents whose children are in pain or in trouble:

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

5th Station Mark 15:21

On their way through Jerusalem they met a man named Simon, who was coming into the city from the country, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross.

Thought

Simon from Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus, what a tale you had to tell your children! You helped Jesus, you gave him your strength on the streets of Jerusalem. Willing or unwilling, you, Simon, have become part of his story, and he part of yours, for you helped him when he needed you. What would we give to be Simon?

Prayer

For a willingness to serve you, in friends and in strangers: Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

6th Station

Matthew 25:35-36, 40

I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me. Whenever you did this – you did it for me.

Thought

Wiping faces, dirty faces; faces full of sweat and tears, faces covered in chocolate and in jam. Wiping faces is something we try to do gently and lovingly, something that soothes and cleanses, something that brings healing.

Wiping faces is something we do for those who are young, or old, or in pain, or in trouble, wanting them to know that they are cherished and loved. And when we wipe the faces of God's little ones, we are wiping the face of God.

Prayer

For those whose faces we wipe and for those who wipe away our tears: Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

7th Station Isaiah 53:7

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.

Thought

I am finding it hard to watch you, Jesus, to see you struggling, to see you on the ground. Into your silence I want to shout: 'Why do they keep on hurting you? What have you done wrong?'

Prayer

For those who today will struggle and fall:
Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer

8th Station Luke 23:27,28

A large crowd of people followed Jesus; among them were some women who were weeping and wailing for him. Jesus turned and said, 'Women of Jerusalem, don't cry for me, but for yourselves and for your children.'

Thought

Weep for the mothers and children of Jerusalem, for Israeli and Palestinian, for Jew and Moslem and Christian,

for the strangers in their midst. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

Pray that her people may live together in justice.

Pray that all people may live together in peace.

Prayer

For those who live in places of conflict and danger;
for peacemakers and peacekeepers in every land:
Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer

9th Station. Isaiah 53:4-5

He endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain we should have borne. All the while we thought that his suffering was punishment sent by God; but because of our sins he was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment he suffered, made whole by the blows he received.

Thought

I am not sure if I can watch this much longer. In his pain I see my pain, in his falling I feel myself falling, in his cross...in his cross I am included.

He carried it for me – for me, and my enemies, and my friends.

Prayer

For those whom I love, for those whom I struggle to love, for those who find me difficult:
Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer

10th Station Mark 15:22-24

They took Jesus to a place called Golgotha, which means the place of the skull. They tried to give him wine mixed with a drug called myrrh, but Jesus would not drink it. Then they crucified him and divided his clothing among themselves, throwing dice to see who would get each piece of clothing.

Thought

Stripped now – of clothing, of disciples, of friends.

Alone, naked and vulnerable, with nothing to protect you from the pain to come.

Prayer

For those deserted by friends, for those who are alone and vulnerable: Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer

11th Station Luke 23:35,49

The people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!' But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Thought

We look on from a distance: a distance of time and space and culture, a distance of a Friday afternoon in England.

And for us it hurts to watch Jesus dying, even at a distance.

It hurts to know that we are being rescued.

It hurts to know how much we are valued and loved.

Prayer

For the depth of your love for us, we thank you. Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer

12th Station Luke 23:44-46

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.' Having said this, he breathed his last.

Thought

In your hands he placed himself: all that he was, all that he had ever been, all his beauty, all his obedience, all his loving. In God's hands he placed himself. He was returning to his father, he was going home.

Prayer

For all who have died today, for all who love them and will miss them: Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer