

All Saints
Good Friday
reflection



Introduction

Today's service is one of meditation and prayer –
an opportunity to reflect on the great suffering that Jesus endured for us.
After each reading and meditation and prayer we will sing the words of the criminal crucified next to Jesus.
This man knew that he was guilty and deserved to be punished.
He acknowledged his sin and appealed to the grace and mercy of Jesus and asked,
"Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom".

As we reflect on the cross and the reason for it, we do the same.
Acknowledging our own weakness and vulnerability,
we appeal to God's mercy and grace and ask,
"Jesus remember me",
"Jesus, do not hold my sin against me",
"Jesus, have mercy on me".

**Jesus,
remember
me
When you
come into
your
kingdom**



**Jesus,
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Jesus is condemned

Matthew 27:11-14, 22-25, 26b



Jesus stood before the Roman governor, who questioned him. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked. "So you say," answered Jesus. But he said nothing in response to the accusations of the chief priests and elders. So Pilate said to him, "Don't you hear all these things they accuse you of?" But Jesus refused to answer a single word, with the result that the Governor was greatly surprised.

"What shall I do with Jesus called the Messiah?" Pilate asked them. "Crucify him!" they all answered. But Pilate asked, "What crime has he committed?" Then they started shouting at the top of their voices: "Crucify him!"

When Pilate saw that it was no use to go on, but that a riot might break out, he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, "I am not responsible for the death of this man! This is your doing!" He had Jesus whipped, he handed him over to be crucified

Meditation

Jesus stands before Pontius Pilate, the power of Rome.

Weakness stands before strength.

And yet, Pilate, the ruthless enforcer for the Empire is not really in control here.

He cannot make Jesus confess.

He cannot quiet the crowds.

For all his power, he cannot find the courage to do what is right.

So he does what is safe.

He yields to the crowds for the sake of order.

Pilate washes his hands – a symbol of his lack of courage and strength and power
– his lack of commitment to do what is right and just.

The One who stands before governor in chains, bruised from the beatings,
spit on his face, is the person with real strength.

Pilate washes his hands and abandons Jesus,
but Jesus does not wash his hands of the Father's will or of us.
He is determined to love you and me
regardless of the cost

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
we are ashamed to admit
how often we wash our hands of you.
Give us the courage to follow you,
even when all others reject you.
Help us to be determined and firm in our
conviction
that following your will and showing love to all
is more important than any other treasure that we
have in this life.

Grant that the way of the cross
may be for us the way of life and peace.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen



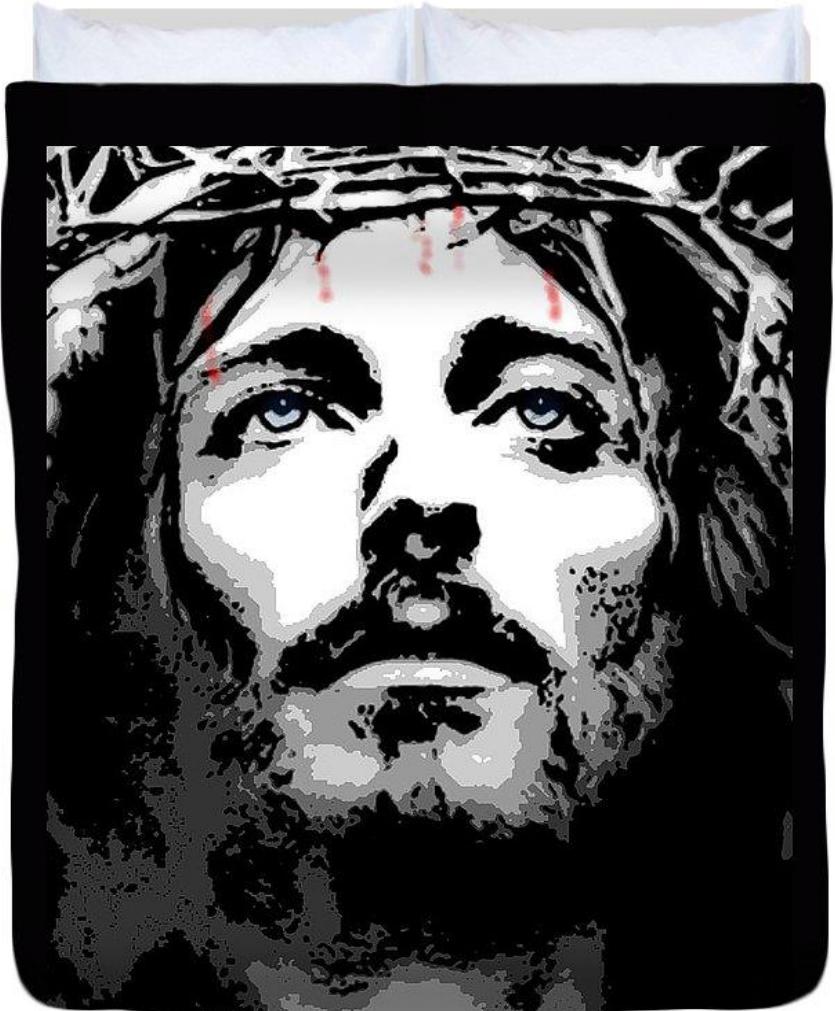
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Jesus carries his cross

Matthew 27:27-31



²⁷ Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. ³⁰ They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ³¹ After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Meditation

How cruel people can be towards their fellow human beings.

We hear of men, women and children suffering and dying at the hands of others,
even those who claim to love them.

How unkind can we be to the people around us?

We like to think that we are ready to follow Jesus, who offers us peace and love.
But are we? Are we willing to let love and peace control us and lead us to live as
people who truly want to serve others, even though it may not always be easy or
convenient?

There in Pilate's courtyard we see a true servant.

He was willing to endure anything, no complaints, no protesting his innocence,
no cursing, simply accepting the cross for us. Enduring all things for us.

The thorns, the whip, the mockery, the nails, the cruel death
– he did it all for us.

He loves us even though it is our sin that caused him so much pain.

Prayer

Thank you, Jesus,
for allowing yourself to be tried and
condemned and scourged.
For the joy of bringing salvation to all
people
and because of your great love for us,
you endured the shame and pain.

Amen.



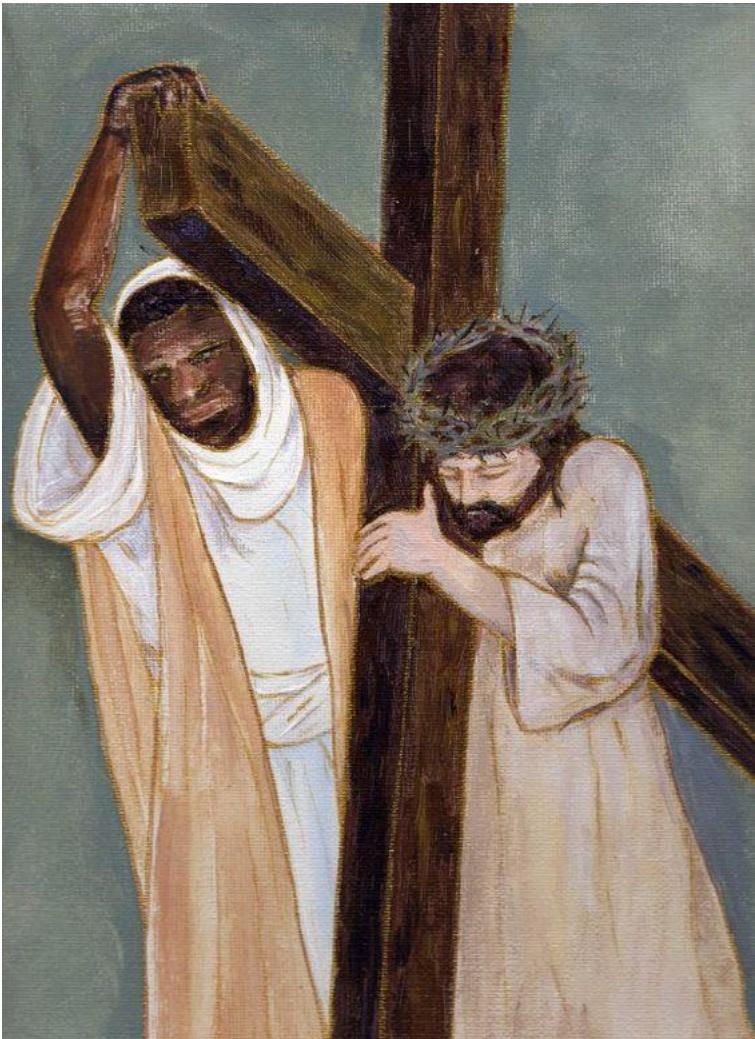
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Simon carries the cross

Matthew 27:32



32 As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross.

Meditation

Simon from Cyrene was just a bystander
passing through on his way into town from the countryside.
And yet he bears the weight of the cross to save Jesus' strength.

Would I have had the courage to face the Roman soldiers
and risk being forced to walk with Jesus and his cross?
When the soldiers were looking around for someone to press into service,
would I have looked away and pretended not to notice what was happening?
It's easy to pretend not to see the needs, the grief, and the suffering around me every day.

It is easy to convince myself that I am too busy, or too tired,
or have too much on my plate already to get involved in the lives of others.
There are simply too many who need too much.

And yet, I remember something that Jesus said,
something about taking up my own cross and following him.
Jesus said something about becoming a servant of all,
of putting myself last and others first.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,
your Son came not to be served, but to serve.
Forgive us for becoming
so preoccupied with ourselves
that we have become deaf and blind
to the grief and suffering of those around us.
Remind us that we cannot love you
without loving others.
Help us to remember that to be a follower of yours
means that we share in the burdens of others.
Lord, show us someone we may help.
Amen.



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Jesus is crucified

Matthew 27:33-40



They came to a place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”). There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: this is Jesus, the king of the Jews.

Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!”

Meditation

The last awful step in the journey of death is about to be taken.

Jesus is nailed to the cross.

I want to rage at the injustice of this;

the cruelty of the Romans;

the hypocrisy of the High Priest and religious leaders;

the cowardice of the disciples;

the treachery of Judas;

the fickleness of the crowds;

Don't they remember that Jesus only spoke of love and even of loving our enemies?

How could they be so cruel to the most perfect human who had ever lived?

And yet, would we have done differently?

Are the guilty ones those who were actually there?

Or is it human sin that drives in the nails?

Jesus, you are on the cross, dying, because of sin.

My sin.

Prayer

Lord, remind us of the deathly cost of sin.
Forgive us for those things we have done
that are displeasing to you.

Forgive us for not allowing you to deal with
the darkness that we harbour
in the hidden recesses of our hearts.

Forgive us for those things we should have done,
but found excuses not to do.

Give us grace to humble ourselves before you,
so that our sins may be laid bare
and we may know your forgiveness.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.



**Jesus,
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**Jesus,
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Jesus dies

Mark 15:33-34, 37-39

At noon the whole country was covered with darkness, which lasted for three hours. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud shout, "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?" With a loud cry Jesus died. The curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The army officer who was standing there in front of the cross saw how Jesus had died. "This man was really the Son of God!" he said



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.

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.

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?

Wore 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.