

# Passiontide Promise

Daily Morning Prayer During the Last Two Week of Lent



St Mary's LINTON

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Rooted in God. Rooted in Community





*On Maundy Thursday - reflection by David W*

*O, dearly, dearly has he loved, and we must love him too,  
And trust in his redeeming blood, and try his works to do (C F Alexander)*

O Lord, open our lips  
**and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**  
Let your ways be known upon earth,  
**your saving power among the nations.**

Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation,  
to you be praise and glory for ever.  
As a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief  
your only Son was lifted up  
that he might draw the whole world to himself.  
May we walk this day in the way of the cross  
and always be ready to share its weight,  
declaring your love for all the world.  
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

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

(Taizé community)



*Thursday Psalm 23 and a reading from 1 Peter*

1 The Lord is my shepherd;  
therefore can I lack nothing.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures  
and leads me beside still waters.

3 He shall refresh my soul  
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

5 You spread a table before me  
in the presence of those who trouble me;  
you have anointed my head with oil  
and my cup shall be full.

6 Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.**



Christ himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

*1 Peter 2.24,25*

Reflection



Some twenty years ago the National Gallery held an exhibition called 'Seeing Salvation'. It was a vast exhibition, intent on making the range of Christian art accessible and intelligible to those without faith. For many of us it faced us with images of Christ that was familiar, surprising and challenging.

This piece has stayed with me. Haunted me over the years since then. It is called 'Christ on the Cold Stone.' This sculpture portrays a life-sized Jesus, seated on a stone. There is no incident like this in the bible. This an imaginative piece; perhaps it is how Christ looked as he was waiting His turn to be nailed to His cross.

It's a hard piece to look at. I remember having to go away, yet being drawn back to it time and time again. It's a shocking piece. He looks so frail. It is an uncomfortable piece. He is completely naked. There is no delicately placed drapery or loincloth. He is completely exposed, completely vulnerable. His pose, cheek resting on hand, speaks of the deepest melancholy. Here is, in Isaiah's words,

*A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Isaiah 53:3 NKJV*

This sculpture epitomises the inconsolable sorrow of the saviour.

Originally this sculpture would have been painted, and there are still traces of colour on it. However, the ghostly whiteness adds a sense of shock and dismay to the seated figure. It's as if He has just been fully faced with the awfulness of what is to happen in the last hours of His earthly life. Facing him, we are forced to face the depth of his physical and psychological anguish, of the depths we have brought Him to.

Emile Mâle, the French art historian wrote of this

*‘ the seated Christ summarises the entire passion; he has exhausted the violence, the ignominy , the bestiality of man... Here is the abyss of suffering, and the extreme limit of art... The seated Christ thinks and suffers. Thus, art had to express the profoundest moral suffering imaginable and link it with the extreme of physical suffering. ’*

It is as if the sculpture is asking us, in words from Jeremiah's Lamentations and often thought to apply to the Messiah

*Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?*

*Behold and see*

*If there is any sorrow like my sorrow,*

*Which has been brought on me,*

*Which the Lord has inflicted*

*In the day of His fierce anger. Lamentations 1:12 NKJV*

It forces our guilt to bubble to the surface, to break the barriers we put around it, the pretence that we're not so bad really. Those eyes leave us with no illusions about ourselves. However, with time meditating on this statue, on this picture our guilt is balanced by another emotion. An ever-deepening sense of gratitude that He did that for me. Hard as it is to believe, He would have done it just for me.

You can't see it in the picture, and indeed it might be my inaccurate memory of the day, but I think I remember being struck by seeing something on one of my return visits to this piece. The stone of the sculpture is rough. You can see the graininess of it in the picture.

However, His head, above the crown of thorns seemed to have a slight sheen to it. The sort of sheen that came from generations of hands touching and rubbing against it and smoothing it. Hands laid on it, on Him in blessing.

Maundy Thursday (Week Two): X Jesus is stripped of his garments

*You can't go on, you go on anyway.  
He goes with you, his cradle to your grave.  
Now is the time to loosen, cast away  
The useless weight of everything but love.  
For he began his letting go before,  
Before the worlds for which he dies were made,  
Emptied himself, became one of the poor,  
To make you rich in him and unafraid.  
See as they strip the robe from off his back  
They strip away your own defences too,  
Now you could lose it all and never lack,  
Now you can see what naked Love can do.  
Let go these bonds beneath whose weight you bow,  
His stripping strips you both for action now.*

Malcolm Guite









We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;  
**by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**  
God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.  
**We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.**

We preach Christ crucified,  
the power of God and the wisdom of God.  
**By your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**  
God forbid that I should glory,  
save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
**We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you;**  
**by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

cf 1 Corinthians 1 and Galatians 6

**The word of the cross is folly  
to those who are perishing,  
but to those who are being saved  
it is the power of God.**

1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,   
who has come to his people and set them free.  
2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,   
born of the house of his servant David.  
3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old   
to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us,  
4 To show mercy to our ancestors,   
and to remember his holy covenant.  
5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:   
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,  
6 Free to worship him without fear,   
holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, ♦  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,  
8 To give his people knowledge of salvation ♦  
by the forgiveness of all their sins.  
9 In the tender compassion of our God ♦  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, ♦  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 1.68-79

**Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**The word of the cross is folly  
to those who are perishing,  
but to those who are being saved  
it is the power of God.**

With faith and love and in union with Christ,  
let us offer our prayer before the throne of grace.

Have mercy on your people,  
for whom your Son laid down his life:

**God of love, hear our prayer**

Bring healing and wholeness to people and nations,  
and have pity on those torn apart by division:

**God of love, hear our prayer**

Strengthen all who are persecuted for your name's sake,  
and deliver them from evil:

**God of love, hear our prayer**

Look in mercy upon all who suffer,  
and hear those who cry out in pain and desolation:  
**God of love, hear our prayer**

Bring comfort to the dying,  
and gladden their hearts with the vision of your glory:  
**God of love, hear our prayer**

Give rest to the departed  
and bring them, with your saints, to glory everlasting:  
**God of love, hear our prayer**

Let us commend the world, for which Christ died,  
to the mercy and protection of God.

*From Palm Sunday - Week Two*

Almighty and everlasting God,  
who in your tender love towards the human race  
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ  
to take upon him our flesh  
and to suffer death upon the cross:  
grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility,  
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

Standing at the foot of the cross,  
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**



### *The Conclusion*

May Christ, who bore our sins on the cross,  
set us free to serve him with joy.

**Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Acknowledgements:

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