**Resources - Good Friday 25 March 2016**

**Prayer Litany** (inspired by John 19:23-30)

When the soldiers crucified Jesus,

they took his clothes and his sandals,

and divided them into four shares, one for each soldier.

His shirt was seamless,

woven as one piece from the top to the bottom.

They said to each other,

“Let’s not tear it. Let’s cast lots to see who will get it.”

This was to fulfil the scripture,

*They divided my clothes among themselves,*

*and they cast lots for my clothing.*

That’s what the soldiers did.

**Lord Jesus, we divide you.**

**We claim you belong to us.**

**Others claim you belong to them.**

**Help us to see you in your wholeness,**

**pouring out your love for all people.**

Jesus’ mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas,

and Mary Magdalene stood near the cross.

When Jesus saw his mother

and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby,

he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.”

Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.”

And from that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

**Lord Jesus, some followers stayed with you to the end.**

**We want to have that kind of faith.**

**Give us the strength to see things through,**

**even in the midst of darkness, danger and despair.**

After this, knowing that everything was already completed,

in order to fulfil the scripture, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”

A jar full of sour wine was nearby,

so the soldiers soaked a sponge in it,

placed it on a hyssop branch,

and held it up to his lips.

**Lord Jesus, you showed us God’s abundant hospitality**

**and turned water into wine.**

**We showed you human hospitality**

**and let things go sour.**

**We showed no mercy,**

**and yet we ask for your mercy, Lord.**

When he had received the sour wine, Jesus said,

“It is completed.”

Bowing his head, he gave up his life.

~ written by Martha Spong, in conversation with John 19:23-30, CE Bible

[Sending Out: Good Friday](http://re-worship.blogspot.com.au/2015/03/sending-out-good-friday.html)

The story has been told,

and now we return to the world where we live and wait.

**The worship is over?**

No, the worship continues while we wait and watch.

Our worship will close after the stone has been removed

and the flame of hope has been re-lit.

**So we go out to wait,**

**we watch for the hope that defies despair,**

**the life that defies death,**

**the beginning that defies the end.**

While we wait,

while darkness covers the land of faith,

remember that no matter how abandoned we may feel

we are not alone.

**God has not and will not abandon us.**

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

~ posted by Rev Gord on his blog, Worship Offerings. <http://worshipofferings.blogspot.ca/>

[A Blessing for Good Friday](http://re-worship.blogspot.com.au/2015/03/a-blessing-for-good-friday.html) - Song of the Winding Sheet

We never

would have wished it

to come to this

yet we call

these moments holy

as we hold you

Holy the tending

holy the winding

holy the leaving

as in the living

Holy the silence

holy the stillness

holy the turning

and returning to earth.

Blessed is the one

who came

in the name

blessed is the one

who laid

himself down

blessed is the one

emptied for us

blessed is the one

wearing the shroud.

Holy the waiting

holy the grieving

holy the shadows

and gathering night

Holy the darkness

holy the hours

holy the hope

turning toward light.

~ written by Jan L. Richardson, and posted on The Painted Prayerbook. <http://paintedprayerbook.com/>

Reflection: What is Truth? (inspired by John 18:38)

“What is truth?”

Pilate stared at the tired Galilean Jew in front of him.

Jesus was silent.

Pilate’s eyes widened.

“What *is* truth?” he repeated, more firmly.

Jesus didn’t blink.

Or speak.

There were no words to reply.

Jesus was answering the question.

Simply by being.

The sheer fact of his existence,

 his embodiment of all that is Holy,

answered the question.

The truth is never in words.

It was always, is always the Word.

The truth is a person,

a person named Jesus,

 the person we understand to be the Christ.

He is the way, the life, and the truth.

There is no other Truth.

This Truth,

this person,

promised we would encounter him in others.

In the hungry.

In the sick.

In the lonely.

In the imprisoned.

In the thirsty.

In the outcasts.

The Truth is in them.

~ written by lutheranjulia, and posted on RevGalBlogPals. <http://revgalblogpals.org/>

[Prayer of Confession: Good Friday](http://re-worship.blogspot.com.au/2015/03/prayer-of-confession-good-friday.html)

God of Passion,

on this day of betrayal and death,

we remember those times we have been part of the crowd

seeking our best interest over what is right and good.

God of Fidelity,

on this day of fear and denial,

we remember those times when we choose the path of safety

over loyalty to your Way.

God of Constant Presence,

on this day of despair and loss,

we remember the ways we have wandered away

from your presence,

only to complain that we are abandoned.

God of the Cross,

for all the ways we have missed the mark,

all the ways we have come up short,

forgive us.

Through your Grace bring us back into relationship.

Help us find the path again.

*...time of silent prayer...*

Even in the face of betrayal and rebellion,

even in the face of death and denial,

even in the face of fear and despair,

God's Grace knows no bounds.

We ARE forgiven,

we ARE called back into relationship,

we ARE set back on the path that leads to the Realm of God.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**

~ posted by Rev Gord on his blog, Worship Offerings. <http://worshipofferings.blogspot.ca/>

[Reflection: Thirty Pieces of Silver](http://re-worship.blogspot.com.au/2015/03/reflection-thirty-pieces-of-silver.html)

(inspired by Matthew 26:15, Mark 14:11, Luke 22:3-6, John 13:27-30)

you are cheap at the price, jesus:  
thirty pieces of silver for a kingdom.

i bet judas and you had conversations galore about this  
for three years nearly,  
that this was no surprise to you.

i can imagine him taking you aside saying, 'now, lord. now!  
the people will listen and they'll rally round you.  
this is the kairos.'

and what was your reply?

did you have one  
or was it a silent acceptance of what people cannot accept  
that love is a different way  
it is never by force  
never by conflict  
never by violence

that they saw the wrong conflict

this one was much bigger

~ written by Roddy Hamilton, and posted on Mucky Paws. <http://www.nkchurch.org.uk/index.php/mucky-paws>

[Prayer of Adoration: O Come, Let Us Adore Him](http://re-worship.blogspot.com.au/2015/03/prayer-of-adoration-o-come-let-us-adore.html)

Lord Jesus,

preaching good tidings to the people,

proclaiming release to captives,

setting at liberty those who are bound:   
Lord Jesus Christ: **we adore you.**   
  
Lord Jesus,

friend of the outcast and the poor,

feeder of the hungry,

healer of the sick:   
Lord Jesus Christ: **we adore you.** 

Lord Jesus,

denouncing the oppressor,

exposing the hypocrite,

overcoming evil with good:   
Lord Jesus Christ: **we adore you.** 

Lord Jesus,

pattern of gentleness,

teacher of holiness,

prophet of the kingdom:   
Lord Jesus Christ: **we adore you.** 

Lord Jesus,

dying to save us from our sin,

rising to give us eternal life,

ascending to prepare our heavenly home:   
Lord Jesus Christ: **we adore you.**   
~ written by David Beswick, and posted on <http://www.beswick.info/rclresources/L3B97OS.htm>

[Prayer: Our Great High Priest](http://re-worship.blogspot.com.au/2014/05/prayer-our-great-high-priest.html) (inspired by Hebrews 4:14-16; Hebrews 5:7-10)

Father, O God most high,  
who dwells in the highest of heavens,  
O God most high: we praise you.

Father, O Lord most exalted,  
beyond our thoughts and imaginations,  
O God most high: we praise you.

We celebrate the victory of your Son,  
who has overcome death  
and saved us from the power of sin.  
O God most high: we praise you.

Our great high priest  
has gone before,  
has entered into the Holy of Holies,  
and has opened up a way for us to follow.

In his name, we too would enter into your eternal presence,  
for he is our priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.  
To him be all praise,  
together with you, O Father,  
and the Holy Spirit,  
one Lord, the same in every age.  
**Amen and Amen.**

~ Hughes Oliphant Old*, Leading in Prayer: A Workbook for Ministers* <http://www.amazon.com/Leading-Prayer-A-Workbook-Ministers/dp/0802808212>*.*

[Good Friday Invitation to Worship](http://re-worship.blogspot.com.au/2014/03/good-friday-invitation-to-worship.html) Opening Words

*(inspired by the events in Matthew 26-27, Mark 14-15, Luke 22-23, John 18-19)*

Today is one of the grey areas of the Christian year:

a day when the lights are dimmed

and the sky feels overcast even if it isn’t:

a day when theologians and poets

feel as if a heavy veil is drawn over heart and mind.

An inexplicably sad day.

We resist the grey areas,

prefer to see everything in black and white,

look for cloudless, sunny skies,

try not to read between the lines;

throw in a bright colour or two

to try and enliven the scene.

In the grey light of early morning -

after a night in the ecclesiastical high court,

and denial by one of his own circle -

Jesus found himself at the gates

of the reluctant Pilate, who promptly

tried to hand him back to the Jews.

And though the sun rose that morning,

the whole world turned grey for One

who found himself without friend or helper,

faced with drinking a cup he’d prayed

would be turned away from him,

knowing that life was about to be drained out of him.

We are invited to accompany Jesus through this grey day:

to be witnesses to his suffering,

to keep silence before his cry of dereliction.

In our imaginations, let us trudge through Jerusalem,

until we come to the place of the Cross:

and then, let us not turn our faces away.

In this grey day lie all the sorrows and failings

of a humanity that strives for high success,

yet comes up against human limitations,

and falls to the ground in despair.

A humanity whose peace plans

give way to guns, and whose political promises

become papers in filing cabinets.

Here is a day marked by the brokenness of the world.

But it is not a day to wallow in misery,

or to indulge in morbid thoughts about the crucifixion.

It is simply a sombre, dignified day

when we remember how it was for Jesus,

and find at the foot of the cross

a place to lay down ours and the world’s sorrow.

On grey days it is hard to see clearly,

difficult to understand things that aren’t clear.

Yet all we are asked to do today is to be present

to the sacred story as it is retold, and

to the inexplicable, mysterious, wondrous

transaction that was, and still is taking place.

~ written by Ann Siddall, in *Lent to Easter liturgies: Year C.* Posted on the website of the Stillpoint Spirituality Centre.  <http://stillpoint.unitingchurchsa.org.au/>

[Prayer at the Foot of the Cross](http://re-worship.blogspot.com.au/2014/03/prayer-at-foot-of-cross.html)

God of life, God of beginnings and endings,

today we pause to remember the power of death.  
Today we tell the story of what happens

when someone angers those in power.  
Today we tell a story of betrayal by a friend,

trial by empire,

execution as a way of silencing the one who names injustice.  
Today we tell a story that happened long ago in a land far away.  
Today we tell a story that continues to happen today in places close at hand.  
  
As we remember the story today help us to see its truth.  
As we tell of Jesus' trial and execution,

remind us of those who are found legally guilty

for doing and saying the right things.  
As we tell of the friends who are conspicuously absent from the cross,

remind us how easily we slip away

when the struggle for justice becomes dangerous or challenging.  
As we look at the cross,

remind us of the power of empire in any age,

and remind us of our duty as people of faith to proclaim a different empire,

a different kingdom, a new way of living together.

God of endings, today we hear the agonized words “It is finished”.

Today we think of all those things that are stopped before they come to fruition,

of hopes crushed beneath reality's heavy foot,

of promises left unfulfilled,

of possibilities that leave us wondering....

God of life and death, beginnings and endings,

today we pause to remember the power of those in charge to run the world.  
Today we remember the many people near and far who are broken by that power:  
those who live in places where peace is just a word,

not a reality, not even a dream;  
those who are pushed to the margins

because of their race, their gender, their bank balance,

their marital status, their orientation,

or any of the countless other ways we find to set people apart;  
those who live with nothing so that others may live with abundance  
those who choose to challenge the injustices in their world

and are crushed beneath the feet of those in charge - *...time of silent prayer...*

But even as we remember that power,

we remember that day follows night,

hope replaces despair,

and life will conquer death.

And now, as we prepare to leave this gathering,

may we do so ready to challenge the empires of our world,

even if such a challenge leads us to a cross outside the city gates.

Help us remember that every ending is a new beginning,

even if in the depths of The End

we have no way of seeing what that new beginning might be.  
We pray in the name of the one who showed us

the depth of his passion for Your Kingdom,

 who taught us to live in love and justice,

in whose life, death and resurrection we can find the path to Kingdom living,

and who taught his friends to pray by saying:  
Our Father, who art in heaven...

~ posted by Rev Gord on his blog, Worship Offerings. <http://worshipofferings.blogspot.ca/>

Blessing for Good Friday

You will know

this blessing

by how it

does not stay still,

by the way it

refuses to rest

in one place.

You will recognize it

by how it takes

first one form,

then another:

now running down

the face of the mother

who watches the breaking

of the child

she had borne,

now in the stance

of the woman

who followed him here

and will not leave him

bereft.

Now it twists in anguish

on the mouth of the friend

whom he loved;

now it bares itself

in the wound - the cry,

the finishing and

final breath.

This blessing

is not in any one

of these alone.

It is what

binds them

together.

It is what dwells

in the space

between them,

though it be torn

and gaping.

It is what abides

in the tear

the rending makes.

~ written by Jan L. Richardson, and posted on The Painted Prayerbook. <http://paintedprayerbook.com/>

[Prayer: We Give You Thanks and Praise](http://re-worship.blogspot.com.au/2014/03/prayer-we-give-you-thanks-and-praise.html)

Now we know:

all is grace - all is gift.

You give us all good things: life and love;

daily bread and water that quenches our thirst;

friends and faith.

Most of all, in your Son, Jesus,

you meet us with a love that will never let us go;

you utter words of mercy and forgiveness

that override the hurts, and heal our brokenness;

you offer new beginnings

where we had expected only dead ends.

We give you thanks and praise

for the mystery of your suffering love

that gives us life.

We give you thanks and praise

that you know our weakness

and hear our prayers.

We give you thanks and praise

that all our dying and living

is held in your good keeping.

Now we know:

all is grace - all is gift.

We give you thanks and praise.

~ written by Christine Jerrett, and posted on Christine Jerrett: Reflections on being the Church in God’s new creation. <http://christinejerrett.wordpress.com/tag/prayer/>

[Pastoral Prayer: The Death of Jesus](http://re-worship.blogspot.com.au/2014/03/pastoral-prayer-death-of-jesus.html)

God of love, we remember today all that our blessed Lord endured for us.

Let us remember how Jesus was betrayed,

and given up into the hands of wicked men …

Lord Jesus, we remember today that it was one of

Your own familiar friends who betrayed You,

and we know that there is nothing that so breaks the heart

as the disloyalty of one whom we call friend.

Grant that we may not betray You.

Save us:

From the cowardice that would disown You when it is hard to be true to You;

From the disloyalty that betrays You in the hour

when You need some - one to stand by You;

From the fickleness that blows hot and cold in its devotion;

From the fair-weather friendship that,

when things are difficult or dangerous,

makes us ashamed to show whose we are and whom we serve.

Let us remember how Jesus suffered death upon the Cross …

Lord Jesus, help us to remember the lengths

to which Your love was ready to go;

That having loved Your own You loved them to the very end;

The love than which none can be greater,

The love that lays down its life for its friends;

That it was while people were yet enemies that You died for them.

Let us remember how Jesus now lives and reigns …

Help us to remember,

That the crucified Lord is the Risen Lord;

That the cross has become the Crown.

So grant unto us,

to trust in His love and to live in His presence;

that we may share in His glory.

This we ask for Your love’s sake. Amen.

~ written by William Barclay, and posted on Will Humes’ WJH website. <http://willhumes.net/category/liturgy/>

The Unrepentant Brigand - A Reflection on Luke 23:39-43 (Australian view)

Every year it's the same. I get crucified, me and my mate over there and Jesus in the middle. And every year they look up at us from their congregations. My mate's the good guy because he repented. I'm the bad guy. And they look up at me as if I'm some kind of criminal, an immoral person.

I'm not a bad guy. I'm a freedom fighter for my people. Read the stories! That's what it says. That's what the Greek means. That's why I was crucified; because I wanted change. That's why we were all crucified. They even accused Jesus of wanting to be the king of the Jews. See the accusation stuck above his head? The authorities wanted to get rid of us because we want to get rid of them and their oppression. They call people like me terrorists, but all rich people in power call freedom fighters terrorists.

We all want the same thing: me and my mate and Jesus, too. We want change. My mate did a bit of a rethink at the last minute and now prefers Jesus' way of going about it - no violence. I don't. I follow Che Ghevara and Barabbas. It's got past the stage of negotiating; we now have to take up arms. That's my way.

And all those people look at us with their pious faces. Preoccupied with their private morality they look down their noses at me and think I was someone who broke their private morality rules. I wish they would see that I've probably got more in common with Jesus than they have, especially when they often don't seem to care about people being oppressed and downtrodden. Can't they see that religious people are often the biggest stumbling blocks to change - just look at Jesus' experience! Still he and I don't see eye to eye on how to get things changed and I'd never fit in with his lot.

He promised my mate he would join him in paradise. I'd like to go to Australia one day, too. Is that really where our vision is fulfilled?

I can't stick around talking because I'm going to die soon. Pity me, but please don't moralise about me. I tried. See ya' next year. I doubt if anything will be different.

~ written by Bill Loader, and posted on William Loader’s Home Page. [http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/brigand.html](http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/%257Eloader/brigand.html)

[Litany of Confession: Good Friday](http://re-worship.blogspot.com.au/2014/03/litany-of-confession-good-friday.html) - Where are you?

1:         Where am I? I confess I am not always at the cross.

            It’s easy to be distracted and let my

            attention move here and there.

2:         I confess, I’m not always grateful for the death of Jesus.

            A person gets busy with all sorts of things.

1:         Good things, mind you,

            like family and church committees and responsibilities to aging parents.

            Community projects.

2:         Doing homework, shopping.

            Part time work. Life gets hectic.

1:         And burdensome.

2:         I confess I try to carry my own burdens.

1:         And work out my own salvation.

2:         I like to be in control.

1:         I wonder, do I betray Jesus with my self-sufficiency?

2:         Do I deny him with my self-centred living?

1,2:      All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way.

2:         We have been ungrateful.

1:         Our hearts have not been humble.

2:         Our spirits are not contrite.

1:         Teach us how to find your presence, God, at the cross.

2:         Teach us how to share the death of Jesus.

1,2:      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.

Congregation may join in the singing of *“Were you there…”*

~ from *Were You There When they Crucified My Lord: A dramatic reading for the passion week.* Posted in the *From Our Churches* archive on the Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre website.  <http://resources.mennonitechurch.ca/FileDownload/12979/Were_You_There_When_They_Crucified_My_Lord.pdf>