

## Passiontide and Holy Week – Introduction to the Season

It is still uncertain when Christians first began to make an annual (as opposed to a weekly) memorial of the death and resurrection of Christ. This *Pascha* (a word derived indirectly from *pesach*, Hebrew 'Passover') was at first a night-long vigil, followed by the celebration of the Eucharist at cock-crow, and all the great themes of redemption were included within it: incarnation, suffering, death, resurrection, glorification. Over time, the *Pascha* developed into the articulated structure of Holy Week and Easter. Through participation in the whole sequence of services, the Christian shares in Christ's own journey, from the triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the empty tomb on Easter morning. The procession with palms, which was already observed in Jerusalem in the fourth century, is accompanied by the reading or singing of the Passion Narrative, in which the whole story of the week is anticipated. Maundy Thursday (from *mandatum*, 'commandment', because of the use of John 13.34 in the Antiphon) contains a rich complex of themes: humble Christian service expressed through Christ's washing of his disciples' feet, the institution of the Eucharist, the perfection of Christ's loving obedience through the agony of Gethsemane.

After keeping vigil, Thursday passes into Good Friday with its two characteristic episodes. The veneration of the Cross is older; the sequence of meditations and music known as the Three Hours' Devotion was introduced into the Church of England in the nineteenth century. The first is now sometimes incorporated into the structure of the second. It is a widespread custom for there not to be a celebration of the Eucharist on Good Friday, but for the consecrated bread and wine remaining from Maundy Thursday to be given in communion. The church remains stripped of all decoration. It continues bare and empty through the following day, which is without liturgy: there can be no adequate way of recalling the being dead of the Son of God, other than silence. But within it there grows a sense of anticipation and completion, as Easter draws near.

This solemn season preserves some of the oldest texts still in current use, and rehearses the deepest and most fundamental Christian memories. At the same time, the services and ceremonies of Holy Week have in the course of Christian history been the occasion of, or have actively encouraged, hostility towards the Jews. The '*Ioudaioi*' of St John's Gospel have all too easily been identified with 'the Jews' as a whole, or more specifically those Jews who were neighbours of a Christian church. This places a double responsibility on those who lead the keeping of Holy Week today: to be faithful to the act of collective memory, but also to be sensitive to the ways in which an unreflecting use of traditional texts (like the Reproaches) can perpetuate a strain of Christian anti-Semitism.

# THE CELEBRATION OF OUR LORD'S PASSION

## ¶ THE GATHERING

*All stand. The clergy and servers enter in silence before a bare altar. All may kneel for a time of silent prayer as the priest prostrates himself. The priest then moves to the chair and, without introduction, offers the opening prayer.*

### **The Opening Prayer** - *Remain standing*

President: Let us pray.

*A brief moment of stillness is kept.*

Almighty Father,  
look with mercy on this your family  
for which our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be betrayed  
and given up into the hands of sinners  
and to suffer death upon the cross;  
who is alive and glorified with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**All: Amen.**

## ¶ THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

### **First Reading** - *Isaiah 52:13-end of 53* - *Sit*

Reader: *A reading from the prophet Isaiah.*

See, my servant shall prosper;

he shall be exalted and lifted up,  
and shall be very high.

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 -

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.

Who has believed what we have heard?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

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.

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.  
Surely he has borne our infirmities  
and carried our diseases;  
yet we accounted him stricken,  
struck down by God, and afflicted.  
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.  
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.  
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.  
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.  
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.  
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.  
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.  
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.

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

*Silence is kept.*

## Responsorial Psalm 22 - *Remain seated*

### Response

v. 1 My God, my God, why have you for - sa - ken me?



My God, my God, why have you forsaken me, and are so far from my salvation, from the words of my distress? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer and by night also, but I find no rest.

### ***Refrain: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?***

Yet you are the Holy One, enthroned upon the praises of Israel. Our forebears trusted in you; they trusted, and you delivered them. They cried out to you and were delivered; they put their trust in you and were not confounded.

### ***Refrain: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?***

But as for me, I am a worm and no man, scorned by all and despised by the people. All who see me laugh me to scorn; they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,

### ***Refrain: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?***

'He trusted in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him deliver him, if he delights in him'. But it is you that took me out of the womb and laid me safe upon my mother's breast.

### ***Refrain: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?***

On you was I cast ever since I was born; you are my God even from my mother's womb, Be not far from me, for trouble is near at hand and there is none to help.

### ***Refrain: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?***

## Gradual Hymn

**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?

His dying crimson like a robe,  
Spreads o'er his body on the Tree;  
Then am I dead to all the globe,  
And all the globe is dead to me.

Were 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.

Watts NEH 95

### **Gospel Acclamation**

*If you are able, please remain standing for the gospel.*

*At 'then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit' there is a pause in prayer during which you are invited to bow or genuflect.*

Priest: Christ was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross.  
But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all names.

### **The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John John 18:1-19:42**

Priest: This is the Passion of the Lord.

*No response is made. Silence is kept.*

### **Hymn**

**MY** song is love unknown,  
my Saviour's love to me,  
love to the loveless shown  
that they might lovely be.  
O who am I, that for my sake,  
my Lord should take frail flesh and die?

He came from his blest throne  
salvation to bestow,  
but men made strange, and none

the longed-for Christ would know.  
But O my friend, my friend indeed,  
who at my need, his life did spend.

Sometimes they strew his way,  
and his strong praises sing,  
resounding all the day  
hosannas to their King.  
Then "Crucify!" is all their breath,  
and for his death they thirst and cry.

Why, what hath my Lord done?  
What makes this rage and spite?  
He made the lame to run,  
he gave the blind their sight.  
Sweet injuries! Yet they at these  
themselves displease, and 'gainst him rise.

They rise, and needs will have  
my dear Lord made away;  
a murderer they save,  
the Prince of Life they slay.  
Yet steadfast he to suffering goes,  
that he his foes from thence might free.

Here might I stay and sing,  
no story so divine:  
never was love, dear King,  
never was grief like thine.  
This is my friend, in whose sweet praise  
I all my days could gladly spend.

*Crossman CH 503*

*During the hymn, the clergy and servers proceed to the back of the church, where a veiled crucifix rests.*

## **The Veneration of the Cross**

*As the cross is carried in and gradually unveiled, the procession stops three times and the following is sung:*

**Priest:** Behold the wood of the cross, on which hung the Saviour of the world.  
**All:** **Come, let us worship.**

*Having been placed in position, the crucifix is venerated by the clergy, then the servers and then the people. You can genuflect or bow as you come forward if you wish. Please take your time.*

*After the veneration, you are invited to sit, stand or kneel for the Prayers of Intercession.*

## Intercessions

### ¶ THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

*A linen cloth is placed over the altar in readiness for the Sacrament of the Pre-Sanctified from the Mass of the Lord's Supper. The hymn is sung as the priest brings the Blessed Sacrament from the Altar of Repose to the High Altar.*

#### Hymn

**O SACRED** head, sore wounded  
Defiled and put to scorn;  
O kingly head, surrounded  
With mocking crown of thorn:  
What sorrow mars thy grandeur?  
Can death thy bloom deflower?  
O countenance whose splendour  
The hosts of heaven above.

Thy beauty, long-desired,  
Hath vanished from our sight;  
Thy power is all expired,  
And quenched the light of light.  
Ah me! For whom thou diest,  
Hide not so far thy grace:  
Show me, O love most highest,  
The brightness of thy face.

I pray thee, Jesus, own me,  
Me, Shepherd good, for thine;  
Who to thy fold hast won me,  
And fed with truth divine.  
Me guilty, me refuse not,  
Incline thy face to me,  
This comfort that I lose not,  
On earth to comfort thee.

In thy most bitter passion  
My heart to share doth cry,  
With thee for my salvation  
Upon the Cross to die.  
Ah, keep my heart thus moved.  
To stand thy Cross beneath,  
To mourn thee, well-beloved,  
Yet thank thee for thy death.

My days are few, O fail not,  
With thine immortal power,  
To hold me that I quail not  
In death's most fearful hour:  
That I may fight befriended,  
And see in my last strife  
To me thine arms extended  
Upon the Cross of life.

*Gerhardt NEH 90  
from a 14th century Latin hymn*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Priest: As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**



## **Giving of Communion**

Priest: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sin of the world. Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

**All: Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,  
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

*The priest and people receive communion.*

## **Hymn**

**WE** sing the praise of him who died,  
Of him who died upon the Cross;  
The sinner's hope let all deride,  
For this we count the world but loss.

Inscribed upon the Cross we see  
In shining letters, 'God is love';  
He bears our sins upon the Tree;  
He brings us mercy from above.

The Cross! It takes our guilt away;  
It holds the fainting spirit up;  
It cheers with hope the gloomy day,  
And sweetens ev'ry bitter cup.

It makes the coward spirit brave,  
And nerves the feeble arm for fight;  
It takes its terror from the grave,  
And gilds the bed of death with light.

The balm of life, the cure of woe,  
The measure and the pledge of love,  
The sinner's refuge here below,  
The angels' theme in heaven above.

*Kelly NEH 94*

*At the end of communion, the altar is cleared.*

## **The Conclusion**

*Silence is kept.*

Priest: Let us pray

O Lord Jesus Christ,  
Son of the living God,  
set your passion, cross and death  
between your judgement and our souls,  
now and in the hour of our death.  
Grant mercy and grace to the living,  
rest to the departed,  
to your Church peace and concord  
and to us sinners forgiveness,  
and everlasting life and glory;  
for, with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
you are alive and reign,  
God, now and for ever.

**All: Amen.**

*No blessing or dismissal is added. Everyone departs in silence.*

*You are welcome to remain in church for prayer.*



*Station of the Cross, St Andrew's Church*