

St Matthew's Church Chichester Road, Croydon

## **Good Friday Meditation**



**2.00pm - 3.00pm**

**15<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

# **Stones**

Stones can be many things: stones as worry stones; stones as weights; stones as symbols of altars built where people have an encounter with God; and stones as used in modern Judaism to leave at a gravesite as a way to honour the memory of the deceased.

At the beginning of the service, each person will receive a stone. You are encouraged to hold it in your hand, to place your worries on it, to feel its weight.

This service is structured around Jesus' last words on the cross. Each reading is followed by a short prayer; each prayer is followed by silence; each silence ends with a song.



## Gathering Words

All you who pass this way  
**look and see the shadow  
of sin.**

All you who pass this way  
**look and see the weight  
of the world.**

All you who pass this way  
**look and see the suffering  
of our Saviour.**

All you who pass this way  
**look and see the sorrow of  
Jesus Christ.**

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes  
away the sins of the world.

*(based on Lamentations 1:12)*

## Chant

Stay with me,  
remain here with me,  
watch and pray, watch and pray.

*Taizé Community, based on Scripture © Ateliers  
et Presses de Taizé*

## The Stone of Condemnation

### Reading

*Luke 23:32-34*

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. <sup>33</sup>When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>34</sup>Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots to divide his clothing.

### Prayer

Forgiving Christ, when the world condemns us, when wrong is done to us, when we carry the weight of things that are too much to forgive, come alongside us in the darkness and give us the grace to be forgiven and forgiving.

*Silence*

### Hymn

Holy Jesus, by Thy passion,  
by the woes which none can share,  
borne in more than kingly fashion,  
by Thy love beyond compare:

*Crucified, I turn to Thee;  
Son of Mary, plead for me.*

By the treachery and trial,  
by the blows and sore distress,  
by desertion and denial,  
by Thine awful loneliness:

By Thy look so sweet and lowly,  
while they smote Thee on the face,  
by Thy patience, calm and holy,  
in the midst of keen disgrace:

By the hour of condemnation,  
by the blood which trickled down,  
when, for us and our salvation:  
Thou didst wear the robe and  
crown:

By the path of sorrows dreary,  
by the cross, Thy dreadful load,  
by the pain, when, faint and weary,  
Thou didst sink upon the road:

By the spirit which could render  
love for hate and good for ill,  
by the mercy, sweet and tender,  
poured upon Thy murderers still:

*William John Sparrow-Simpson (1859-1952)*  
© Novello & Co. Ltd

## **The Stone of Separation**

### **Reading**

*Luke 23:35-43*

And 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!' <sup>36</sup>The soldiers also  
mocked him, coming up and offering  
him sour wine, <sup>37</sup>and saying, 'If you  
are the King of the Jews, save  
yourself!' <sup>38</sup>There was also an  
inscription over him, 'This is the King  
of the Jews.'

<sup>39</sup>One of the criminals who were  
hanged there kept deriding him and  
saying, 'Are you not the Messiah?  
Save yourself and us!' <sup>40</sup>But the  
other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you  
not fear God, since you are under  
the same sentence of condemnation?  
<sup>41</sup>And we indeed have been  
condemned justly, for we are getting  
what we deserve for our deeds, but  
this man has done nothing wrong.'  
<sup>42</sup>Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me  
when you come into your kingdom.'  
<sup>43</sup>He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today  
you will be with me in Paradise.'

### **Prayer**

Reconciling Christ, we are weighed  
down by sin and separation, a world  
that is not at peace, a people who  
are not whole. You reached out to  
the thief, you welcomed him to  
God's side. Come alongside us in the  
darkness and bring grace and peace  
to everything that is broken.

*Silence*

### **Chant**

Jesus, remember me  
when You come into Your kingdom.  
Jesus, remember me  
when You come into Your kingdom.

*Taizé Community, based on Scripture © Ateliers  
et Presses de Taizé*

## **The Stone of Sorrow**

### **Reading**

*John 19:25-27*

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

<sup>26</sup>When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' <sup>27</sup>Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

### **Prayer**

Loving Jesus, we carry the weight of the people we love. We are concerned for their sorrows and suffering. Our care for them is deep, and sometimes there is not much we can do. Come alongside us in the darkness and cradle the ones we love in your strong hands.

*Silence*

### **Hymn**

Mary, blessed grieving mother,  
waiting by the cross of shame,  
through your patient, prayerful vigil,  
kindle hope's eternal flame;  
crying in the pains of earth,  
singing of redemption's birth.

Where the crosses of the nations  
darken still the noon-day skies,  
see the sad madonna weeping  
through a million mothers' eyes.

Holy Mary, full of grace,  
all our tears with yours embrace.

Standing with the suffering Saviour,  
still oppressed by hate and fear,  
where the gentle still are murdered  
and protestors disappear:  
mother of the crucified,  
call His people to your side!

Holy mother, watching, waiting,  
for the saving of the earth;  
in the loneliness of dying,  
speak of hope and human worth,  
there for all the world to see,  
lifted up at Calvary!

*Michael Forster (b. 1946) © 1996 Kevin Mayhew Ltd*

## **The Stone of Despair**

### **Reading**

*Mark 15:33-34*

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. <sup>34</sup>At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' <sup>35</sup>When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' <sup>36</sup>And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' <sup>37</sup>Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. <sup>38</sup>And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. <sup>39</sup>Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he

breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'

## **Prayer**

Lord Jesus Christ, you know what it is to feel that God is far away. You know what it is to call out for God's presence. Come alongside us in the darkness and help us call out for God.

*Silence*

## **Hymn**

Great Son of God,  
You once on Calvary's cross  
fought the long fight  
for truth and freedom's sake,  
endured the scourge,  
the crown of thorns,  
the nail that fixed  
Your youthful body to a stake.  
For six long hours  
You suffered searing pain  
to set Your captive  
people free again.

'Give us a sign from heaven,'  
the people cried.

'If You are the Christ,  
leap down, alive and free.  
Who could accept as Saviour  
one who died  
like some poor miscreant  
skewered to a tree?'

Lord Christ, our Saviour,  
You would not descend  
until Your glorious work  
achieved its end.

'My God, my God,  
where have you gone?' you called,  
alone and helpless,

willing still to share  
through all the gathering  
gloom of Calvary,  
the depth of dying sinners'  
deep despair.

But then triumphant,  
ready now to die,  
'The work is finished!'  
was Your glorious cry.

*Edwin Le Grice (1911-1992) © 1995 Kevin  
Mayhew Ltd*

## **The Stone of Suffering**

### **Reading**

*John 19:28-30*

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), 'I am thirsty.'<sup>29</sup>A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.<sup>30</sup>When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

### **Prayer**

Suffering Saviour, in all our thirst, in all our sickness, in all our longing, in all our pain, you are there. Come alongside us in the darkness and walk with us through all our suffering.

*Silence*

## Hymn

O sacred head, surrounded  
by crown of piercing thorn!  
O bleeding head, so wounded,  
so shamed and put to scorn!  
Death's pallid hue comes o'er Thee,  
the glow of life decays;  
yet angel-hosts adore Thee,  
and tremble as they gaze.

Thy comeliness and vigour  
is withered up and gone,  
and in Thy wasted figure  
I see death drawing on.  
O agony and dying!  
O love to sinners free!  
Jesu, all grace supplying,  
turn Thou Thy face on me.

In this Thy bitter Passion,  
Good Shepherd, think of me  
with Thy most sweet compassion,  
unworthy though I be:  
beneath Thy cross abiding  
for ever would I rest,  
in Thy dear love confiding,  
and with Thy presence blest.

*Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676) based on 'Salve  
caput cruentatum' (14<sup>th</sup> century)  
trans. Henry Williams Baker (1821-1877)*

## The Stone of Death

### Reading

*Luke 23:44-49*

It was now about noon, and  
darkness came over the whole land  
until three in the afternoon,<sup>45</sup> while  
the sun's light failed; and the curtain  
of the temple was torn in two.  
<sup>46</sup>Then Jesus, crying with a loud  
voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I

commend my spirit.' Having said this,  
he breathed his last.<sup>47</sup> When the  
centurion saw what had taken place,  
he praised God and said, 'Certainly  
this man was innocent.'<sup>48</sup> And when  
all the crowds who had gathered  
there for this spectacle saw what  
had taken place, they returned home,  
beating their breasts.<sup>49</sup> But all his  
acquaintances, including the women  
who had followed him from Galilee,  
stood at a distance, watching these  
things.

### Prayer

Dearest Jesus, even in death you are  
with us. When we mourn, when we  
are afraid, when we come to our  
own end, you have been there too.  
Come alongside us in the darkness  
and carry us through death to life.

*Silence*

### Chant

Within our darkest night,  
you kindle the fire that never dies  
away, that never dies away. *(Repeat)*

*You are now invited to place your stone  
beneath the cross — leaving behind  
your worries, letting go of the weight,  
marking an encounter with God, and  
remembering the time Jesus spent in  
the grave until Easter morning.*

*Please leave the church in silence.*

*Service adapted from "Jesus' Last Words – A  
Service of Shadows and Stones" by Erica  
Schemper*