

GOOD FRIDAY THE FINAL HOUR



'Crown of Thorns' by Ingrid Riches

You can follow our recorded service of Good Friday Final Hour at 2 pm via Church YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/KAM8QsgBtOg>

If you are unable to follow the service via YouTube, here some tips how to make it work for you alone or together with your family:

You will need: A Bible, a Cross. You may also wish to have a candle lit at the beginning. This is a reflective service of the last hour. We come to be with Jesus in his hour of need, to remember his passion and death upon the cross and to reflect on the deep themes that the cross evokes in us.

The service begins with silence,

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.

Amen.

In the shadow of our suffering, **is the suffering of Jesus**
In the shadow of our weakness, **is the vulnerability of Christ**
In the shadow of our pain, **is the God who cried out**
We are never rejected, **we are never abandoned.**

Reading John 19.16-25

Silence is kept.

“Here is your son”

So we come to the first of our words from the cross, words spoken by Jesus to Mary his mother and the beloved disciple, John.

Reading John 19.25-7

Reflection

Consider the human heart of Jesus, shown in his care for his mother and the beloved disciple John. These two have travelled with him all the way and now they find themselves at the foot of the cross. Grief has brought them together and now Jesus asks them to care for each other. In the face of his own death, Jesus is creating new bonds of family and interdependence. Not based on ties of blood and family, but upon choice. A common endeavour and strong sense of belonging can be like a family, creating a basic block for repairing communities. This intentional community of love to which we belong, remains steadfast even when we are separated from one another. Because it is formed in the bond of love given right there from upon the cross.

Silence: *We take into the silence: our own grief and sense of loss, our aloneness. We surround these senses with the picture of our church family, the Christians across the world with whom we are bonded through our baptism.*

Be strong, let your heart take courage **all who wait for the Lord**
Lord Jesus, son of the living God, **have mercy upon us.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Strong,
Holy and Immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

“I am thirsty”

So we come to the second word from the cross, Jesus cries out in pain and need.

Reading John 19.28-9

Reflection

The word from the cross speaks of real human need, the most basic need of all. In the heat of the sun and wracked by pain, Jesus cries out ‘I thirst’, I am thirsty, give me drink. He who is the living water, bubbling up for others to find life, he is thirsty - and these words, express that need. Jesus lived a life of generous giving, he poured himself out for others. But he was not afraid to name and know his own real needs. He was not afraid to ask for help. In this cry from the cross ‘I am thirsty’, we see his willingness to receive, and to be needy. In a world full of competence, which prizes strength and self-reliance, these words can encourage us to acknowledge our own incompetence and vulnerability, our own real needs. It takes a certain level of humility to receive from others; and we don’t find it easy, yet it’s important to learn how to give and receive with good grace.

Silence: *We take into the silence: our own dryness and thirst, our own deepest needs, an openness to receive. Our shared vulnerability with the who of humanity.*

Be strong, let your heart take courage **all who wait for the Lord**
Lord Jesus, son of the living God, **have mercy upon us.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Strong,
Holy and Immortal,
have mercy upon us.**

“It is finished”

In our final word from the cross, Jesus knows that the end is near and calls out.

Reading John 19.30

Reflection

The last word from the cross in St John's Gospel: 'It is finished'. The horror is over, it is accomplished, the work is done. In the eyes of the world, this is the moment of absolute failure; but in the purposes of God, this is the consummation of an act of unconditional love for the world. These words don't imply a defeated sense of relief that Jesus' suffering is over, his life is ending: the Greek word *tetelestai* is a word with a strong, triumphant ring, 'It is accomplished.' 'It is complete.' For Jesus there is recognition in the words 'It is finished' that death comes as the completion of a life lived to the full, offered for others. And as we understand this more fully, perhaps it even helps us to face our own death without fear. We may even ultimately see death as a friend, leading us home: 'and thou most gentle death, waiting to hush our latest breath, thou leanest home the child of God, and Christ himself that way has trod'. (*St. Francis, Canticle of the Sun*)

Silence: *We take into the silence: our own sense of mortality, our own accomplishments, an openness to what lies beyond our horizon.*

Be strong, let your heart take courage **all who wait for the Lord**
Lord Jesus, son of the living God, **have mercy upon us.**

**Holy God,
Holy and Strong,
Holy and Immortal,
have mercy upon us**

The Proclamation of the Cross

You may like to look at a picture of, or hold a physical cross in your hand.

Reading John 19.31-42

Acclamations

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

This is the wood of the cross,
on which hung the Saviour of the world.
Come, let us worship.

O Saviour of the world, who by your cross
and precious blood have redeemed us,
save us and help us, we humbly pray.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light,
look favourably on your whole Church,
that wonderful and sacred mystery,
and by the tranquil operation of your perpetual providence
carry out the work of our salvation:
and let the whole world feel and see
that things which were cast down are being raised up
and things which had grown old
are being made new and
that all things are returning to perfection
through him from whom they took their origin,
even Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

We end in silence.