**Good Friday**

**Eternal Life**

**Opening Prayer**

Eternal God,

in the cross of Jesus

we see the cost of our sin

and the depth of your love:

in humble hope and fear

may we place at his feet

all that we have and all that we are,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Bible Reading John 18:1-end 19**

### **Jesus Arrested**

**18**When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it.

**2**Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. **3**So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

**4**Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?”

**5**“Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied.

“I am he,” Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.)**6**When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

**7**Again he asked them, “Who is it you want?”

“Jesus of Nazareth,” they said.

**8**Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go.” **9**This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those you gave me.”[a]

**10**Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.)

**11**Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?”

**12**Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him **13**and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. **14**Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.

### **Peter’s First Denial**

**15**Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest’s courtyard,**16**but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

**17**“You aren’t one of this man’s disciples too, are you?” she asked Peter.

He replied, “I am not.”

**18**It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

### **The High Priest Questions Jesus**

**19**Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

**20**“I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus replied. “I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. **21**Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said.”

**22**When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. “Is this the way you answer the high priest?” he demanded.

**23**“If I said something wrong,” Jesus replied, “testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?” **24**Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

### **Peter’s Second and Third Denials**

**25**Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, “You aren’t one of his disciples too, are you?”

He denied it, saying, “I am not.”

**26**One of the high priest’s servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, “Didn’t I see you with him in the garden?” **27**Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

### **Jesus Before Pilate**

**28**Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover.**29**So Pilate came out to them and asked, “What charges are you bringing against this man?”

**30**“If he were not a criminal,” they replied, “we would not have handed him over to you.”

**31**Pilate said, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.”

“But we have no right to execute anyone,” they objected. **32**This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

**33**Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

**34**“Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

**35**“Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

**36**Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

**37**“You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

**38**“What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. **39**But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews’?”

**40**They shouted back, “No, not him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

### **Jesus Sentenced to Be Crucified**

**19**Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. **2**The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe **3**and went up to him again and again, saying, “Hail, king of the Jews!” And they slapped him in the face.

**4**Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.” **5**When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!”

**6**As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, “Crucify! Crucify!”

But Pilate answered, “You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.”

**7**The Jewish leaders insisted, “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.”

**8**When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, **9**and he went back inside the palace. “Where do you come from?” he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. **10**“Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?”

**11**Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”

**12**From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.”

**13**When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge’s seatat a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). **14**It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon.

“Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews.

**15**But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!”

“Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked.

“We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered.

**16**Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

### **The Crucifixion of Jesus**

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. **17**Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). **18**There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

**19**Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. **20**Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. **21**The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.”

**22**Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

**23**When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

**24**“Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.”

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said,

“They divided my clothes among them
    and cast lots for my garment.”[b]

So this is what the soldiers did.

**25**Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. **26**When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman,[c] here is your son,” **27**and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

### **The Death of Jesus**

**28**Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” **29**A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. **30**When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

**31**Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. **32**The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. **33**But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.**34**Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. **35**The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. **36**These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken,”[d] **37**and, as another scripture says, “They will look on the one they have pierced.”[e]

### **The Burial of Jesus**

**38**Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away. **39**He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.[f] **40**Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. **41**At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. **42**Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

**Reflection** *by Martin*

When Fiona sent round the list of the subjects for these Holy Week devotions, I was a bit late off the blocks so when I replied, I said ‘I’ll take Eternal Life any day!’

But then I got thinking about what my somewhat comic response really meant.

Firstly, do I consider my life choices to be right and those of which God would approve? How do I spend my time, especially at this time of lock down? Are my words and actions worthy of a Christian calling? How do I think of me?

Secondly, would I take ‘Eternal Life any day’? Am I prepared to leave everything around me here on Earth, my family, friends, hopes and plans, and go to the unknown Eternal Life? There is a quote which goes ‘Cricket is a game which the English, not being a spiritual people, have invented to give them some concept of eternity’. This being the case, Dave should be writing this as he will have a greater appreciation than me!

These questions are reasonable, but the answer lies in God’s word – we who believe are saved, not by works alone but by faith. The prisoner on the cross next to Jesus asked to be remembered when Jesus came into His kingdom. Jesus said ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise’.

If a guilty criminal can be accepted so can, indeed so are, we who believe in our Living God! Let us put aside any doubts this Easter and live like Eternal Life is there waiting for us – as it is! Praise God.

**Time of Prayer**

**We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,**

**because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

Let us pray for the Church of God throughout the world:

for unity in faith, in witness and in service,

for bishops and other ministers, and those whom they serve,

for Tim, David and Debbie*,* our bishops, and the people of this diocese,

for all Christians in this place,

for those who are mocked and persecuted for their faith,

that God will confirm his Church in faith,

increase it in love, and preserve it in peace.

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let us pray for the nations of the world and their leaders:

for Elizabeth our Queen and the Parliaments of this land,

for those who administer the law and all who serve in public office,

for all who strive for justice and reconciliation,

especially in this time of world trauma,

that by God’s help the world may live in peace, freedom and hope.

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Most gracious God and Father,

in whose will is our peace,

turn our hearts and the hearts of all to yourself,

that by the power of your Spirit

the peace which is founded on justice

may be established throughout the world;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Let us pray for those who do not believe the gospel of Christ:

for those who have not heard the message of salvation,

for all who have lost faith,

for the contemptuous and scornful,

for those who are enemies of Christ and persecute those who follow him,

for all who deny the faith of Christ crucified,

that God will open their hearts to the truth

and lead them to faith and obedience.

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let us pray for all those who suffer:

for those who are deprived and oppressed,

for all who are sick,

for those in darkness, in doubt and in despair, in loneliness and in fear,

for prisoners, captives and refugees,

for the victims of false accusations and violence,

for all at the point of death and those who watch beside them,

that God in his mercy will sustain them

with the knowledge of his love.

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let us commend ourselves and all God’s children to his unfailing love,

and pray for the grace of a holy life,

that, with all who have died in the peace of Christ,

we may come to the fullness of eternal life

and the joy of the resurrection.

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

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.**

**Song At The Cross** **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zev5tHjCB\_s**

**Closing Prayer**

Life is about living – so help me live it to the full;

Life is about loving – so help me love as you do;

Life is about following – so help me to follow you, Lord;

Life is about action – so help me respond to your Word.

United in life, united in death,

Raised to new life, victory over death.

**Amen**.

**The Last Hour 2-3pm**

The cross of Christ.

**The cross on which the Saviour of the world was hung.**

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

Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow

which was brought upon me,

which the Lord inflicted on the day of his fierce anger.

**Holy God,**

**holy and strong,**

**holy and immortal,**

**have mercy upon us.**

O my people, O my Church,

what have I done to you,

or in what have I offended you?

Testify against me.

I led you forth from the land of Egypt,

and delivered you by the waters of baptism,

but you have prepared a cross for your Saviour.

**Holy God,**

**holy and strong,**

**holy and immortal,**

**have mercy upon us.**

I led you through the desert forty years,

and fed you with manna.

I brought you through tribulation and penitence,

and gave you my body, the bread of heaven,

but you prepared a cross for your Saviour.

 **Holy God,**

**holy and strong,**

**holy and immortal,**

**have mercy upon us.**

What more could I have done for you

that I have not done?

I planted you, my chosen and fairest vineyard,

I made you the branches of my vine;

but when I was thirsty, you gave me vinegar to drink,

and pierced with a spear the side of your Saviour.

**Holy God,**

**holy and strong,**

**holy and immortal,**

**have mercy upon us.**

I went before you in a pillar of cloud,

and you have led me to the judgement hall of Pilate.

I scourged your enemies and brought you

to a land of freedom,

but you have scourged, mocked and beaten me.

I gave you the water of salvation from the rock,

but you have given me gall and left me to thirst.

**Holy God,**

**holy and strong,**

**holy and immortal,**

**have mercy upon us.**

I gave you a royal sceptre,

and bestowed the keys of the kingdom,

but you have given me a crown of thorns.

I raised you on high with great power,

but you have hanged me on the cross.

 **Holy God,**

**holy and strong,**

**holy and immortal,**

**have mercy upon us.**

My peace I gave, which the world cannot give,

and washed your feet as a sign of my love,

but you draw the sword to strike in my name,

and seek high places in my kingdom.

I offered you my body and blood,

but you scatter and deny and abandon me.

 **Holy God,**

**holy and strong,**

**holy and immortal,**

**have mercy upon us.**

I sent the Spirit of truth to guide you,

and you close your hearts to the Counsellor.

I pray that all may be one in the Father and me,

but you continue to quarrel and divide.

I call you to go and bring forth fruit,

but you cast lots for my clothing.

**Holy God,**

**holy and strong,**

**holy and immortal,**

**have mercy upon us.**

I came to you as the least of your brothers and sisters;

I was hungry and you gave me no food,

I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,

I was a stranger and you did not welcome me,

naked and you did not clothe me,

sick and in prison and you did not visit me.

**Holy God,**

**holy and strong,**

**holy and immortal,**

**have mercy upon us.**

*Time of silent reflection…….*

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.

**Amen.**