



A SERVICE
FOR
PASSIONTIDE



Leader: Lent began almost 5 weeks ago and in the Liturgical Life of the Church it is a time to remember and think of the important events that have shaped our Christian Faith.

The story begins after Jesus' baptism when he was driven into the desert by the Holy Spirit - To pray, to fast, to reflect and prepare for what was to come. He knew that his journey would not be easy. His message of love and forgiveness would be laughed at, rejected and treated with contempt. Ultimately, it would lead to his suffering and his death on the cross.

Next week, is Holy Week the last week of Lent and Christians all around the world are invited to share in the celebration of Palm Sunday, the wonder and awe of the Last Supper, the despair of the crucifixion and the incredulous joy of the Easter Miracle.

And so, Jesus came to save all people with the offer of God's love and peace. We begin our service today, by saying together, the Walk with Me Prayer. " In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen."

Leader: Holy Week - The last Week in the life of Jesus.

Jesus' popularity amongst the people was growing, news of his miracles of healing and his message of love, in a world full of hate, had inspired and filled them with hope, expectation and anticipation. Could they dare to believe, that amongst them, in their life time, God had finally sent the Messiah. The One that the prophets of old, had promised. Jerusalem was full of people who had come to celebrate Passover but Jesus was the topic of their conversation. The people were excited, they were noisy and they were ready !

Clip: **Palm Sunday**

Teacher 1: A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew

As Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage at the mount of Olives. There Jesus sent two of the disciples on ahead with these instructions : "Go to the village there ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied up with her colt beside her. Untie them and bring them to me. And if anyone says anything, tell him, the master needs them and then he will let them go at once."

This happened in order to make what the prophet said come true.

"Tell the city of Zion,

Look your King is coming to you!

He is humble and rides on a donkey and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

So the disciples went and did what Jesus had told them to do. They brought the donkey and the colt, threw their cloakes over them, and Jesus got on. A large

crowd of people spread their cloakes on the road while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds walking in front of Jesus and those walking behind began to shout, "Praise to David's Son ! God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise God!"

Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was thrown into an uproar. " Who is he?" The people asked. "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee," the crowds answered.

LEADER: The next day after his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, Jesus went into the Holy Temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling.

He overturned the tables of the money changers and he said to them, "My Fathers house, is a house of prayer not a den for thieves." The Religious leaders were not happy. 'Who does he think he is!' How dare he! We want him arrested and brought in for questioning.

Pause Read slowly and purposefully

Jesus, had started to walk the path to his cross.!

LEADER: The very next day Jesus walked straight back into the Temple and stood there ready to be questioned. Not the actions of a guilty man.

The questioning began..... "Should we pay taxes to Caesar!" If Jesus replied, Yes! He would have been guilty of breaking Jewish law. If he answered, No! Then he would have broken Roman law.

Jesus cleverly asked for a coin and said, "Whose likeness is this? They answered Caesar's. To which Jesus replied, "Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and give to God what belongs to him. Astonished by his answer, no fault or charge could be brought against Jesus but this only fed the determination of the Pharisees to punish Jesus for his words and actions. His attitude was seen as arrogance, in the face of his betters.

The next day, the Pharisees struck a deal with one of Jesus' followers. 30 pieces of silver for handing Jesus over, for further questioning.

Thursday came quickly and with it a chain of events that people would remember, write down and talk about for 2000 years

Video clip: Maundy Thursday

Choir: Stay here and keep watch with me

The Last Supper

LEADER: A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew. Ch 26 : 20 -30

When it was evening Jesus and his disciples sat down to eat. During the meal Jesus said, " I tell you, one of you will betray me."

The disciples were very upset and began to ask him, one aft the other," Surely, Lord, you don't mean me?"

Jesus answered, "One who dips his bread in the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man will die as the Scriptures say he will, but how terrible for that man who betrays the Son of Man ! It would have been better for that man if he had never been born !"

While they were eating Jesus took a piece of bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples and said, " Take and eat it, this is my body."

Then he took a cup, gave thanks to God and gave it to them. " Drink it all of you," he said,

" This is my blood, which seals Gods covenant, my blood poured out for many, for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink this wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in my Fathers Kingdom."

Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

Choir – stay here and keep watch with me

Whilst walking at the foot of the Mount of Olives, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus stopped to pray. " Please Lord, don't let me have to drink from this cup of suffering but not my will be done, but yours." A prayer spoken from the heart, a sentiment shared by so many.

****Choir - ' Stay here and keep watch.'***

Enter Judas and the Jewish Temple guards, a man on a mission. A kiss, a look and the words, "Judas must you betray me with a kiss !"

Jesus is taken and throughout the night he is put on trail, first for the Sin of Blasphemy and then, for the Crime of Treason. It was the Jewish Religious Council who found, an innocent Jesus, guilty of claiming to be the Son of God. Blasphemy !! This same Council, who needed the help and permission of the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, to sentence Jesus to death, for claiming to be the King of the Jews. Treason !!

Choir - ' Stay here and keep watch.'

Pontius Pilate wanting to keep the peace, afraid of a crowd stirred up by the Jewish religious leaders, handed Jesus, an innocent man, over to be crucified. Jesus had been scourged at the pillar! Whipped, lashed using metal barbs, pulling the flesh from his body. They mocked him, put a purple robe on him and pushed a crown of thorns into his head. They laughed as they shouted' " Hail, King of the Jews !"

*** Choir**

A long night, of dark purpose full actions, gave way to the dawn of a new day. The day and the hour, that would allow Jesus to fulfil his own divine intention.

It is Finished Good Friday - Clip

Choir – O Lord hear My Prayer

LEADER: The Crucifixion

As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene named Simon, and the soldiers forced him to carry Jesus' cross. They came to a place called Golgotha, which means, "The place of the skull." There they offered Jesus wine mixed with a bitter substance; but after tasting it he would not drink it.

They crucified him and divided his clothes among them by throwing dice. After that they sat there and watched him. Above his head they put the written notice of the accusation against him: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Then they crucified two bandits with Jesus, one on his right and the other on his left.

People passing by shook their heads and hurled insults at Jesus. "You were going to tear down the Temple and build it up again in three days! Save yourself if you are God's Son! Come on down from the cross!" In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and the elders jeered at him: "He saved others but he can not save himself! Isn't

he the king of Israel? If he comes down from the cross now, we will believe in him ! He trusts in God and claims to be God's Son. Well, then let us see if God wants to save him now !"

At noon the whole country was covered with darkness, which lasted for three hours. At about three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud shout, Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani ?" Which means, " My God, my God, why have you abandoned me ?"

Choir – O Lord Hear My Prayer

Some of the people standing there heard him and said, " He is calling for Elijah !" One of them ran up at once, took a sponge, soaked it in cheap wine, put it on the end of a stick, and tried to make him drink it. But the others said, " Wait, let us see if Elijah is coming to save him !" Jesus again gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

Aine McDonald – May it Be

Reflection: Fr Robert James

LEADER: What is the power of the cross? What is the power that comes from Jesus' suffering, his passion and his death ?
As each candle is extinguished we call to mind the sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the cross.

STUDENT 1: The power of the Cross is love - the love that suffers for the sake of others, love that accepts rejection and keeps on loving, love that gives everything.

A candle is extinguished

STUDENT 1: The power of the Cross is joy - the joy that comes from doing God's will, the joy that is found when our suffering is joined with His, the joy that comes from knowing that Heaven awaits.

A candle is extinguished

STUDENT 1: The power of the Cross is peace - the peace that passes understanding, the inner peace that no storm can shake, the peace that the world cannot give.

A candle is extinguished

STUDENT 2: The power of the cross is patience - the patience that endures pain, the patience that bears humiliations and contempt, the patience that waits for Resurrection.

A candle is extinguished

STUDENT 2: The power of the Cross is kindness - the kindness that forgives one's enemies , the kindness that helps others carry their cross, the kindness that hopes for the good in others saying, " They know not, what they do !"

A candle is extinguished

STUDENT 2: The power of the Cross is goodness - the goodness of a soul living in unity with grace, the goodness that ends violence by not retaliating.

A candle is extinguished

STUDENT 2: The power of the Cross is gentleness - the gentleness that responds to mockery and ridicule with silence, the gentleness that is humility.

A candle is extinguished

LEADER: Mary speaks

The Images In My Head
O you who bear the pain of the whole earth,
I bore you.
O you whose tears give human tears their worth,
I laughed with you.
You, who, when your hem is touched, give power,
I nourished you.
Who turn the day to night in this dark hour,
light comes from you.
O you who hold the world in your embrace,
I carried you.
O you who laughed and ate and walked the shore,
I played with you.
And I, who with all others, died for,
now I hold you.
May I be faithful to this final test,
in this last time I hold my child, my son,
His body close enfolded to my breast,
the holder held: the bearer bare.

Mourning to joy: darkness to mourn.
Open, my arms: your work is done.

Perfect Grace

Bidding Prayers

Leader: With faith and love and in union with Christ, let us offer our prayers before the throne of grace.

Reader 1: Have mercy on your people, for whom your Son laid down his life.

Reader 1: Bring healing and wholeness to people and nations, and have pity on those torn apart by division.

Reader 1: Strengthen all who are persecuted for your name's sake, and deliver them from evil.

Reader 2: Look in mercy upon all who suffer, and hear those who cry out in pain and desolation.

Reader 2: Bring comfort to the dying, and gladden their hearts with the vision of your glory:

Reader 2: Give rest to the departed and bring them, with your saints, to glory everlasting.

Leader: Let us commend the world, for which Christ died, to the mercy and protection of God as we say together the Lord's prayer, **Our Father...**

Choir - 'I watch the Sunrise'

As we journey through the coming days of Holy Week let us fix our eyes upon Jesus and see a new journey, a new relationship. The Cross of Christ is not pretty but it is redemption, it is salvation, it is our hope of glory and may the life-giving cross be the source of all our joy and peace and may we look forward to living in the resurrection of Christ our Lord. Amen

