

# Stations of the Cross

A Meditation for Good Friday

St Bartholomew's Dinard

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**St Bartholomew's Church**  
**Stations of the Cross**  
**A Meditation for Good Friday**

Hymn 549                      When I survey the wondrous cross

**Opening Prayer**

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 wicked men  
 and to suffer death upon the cross  
 who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit  
 one God now and for ever  
 Amen

Then we say together            **Holy God**  
    **holy and strong**  
    **holy and immortal**  
    **have mercy on us**

Before each station of the cross is said the following

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

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

- 1            Jesus is condemned to death  
                  Pontius Pilate
- 2            Jesus is made to bear his cross  
                  Centurion
- 3            Jesus falls the first time  
                  A Sadducee
- 4            Jesus meets his blessed mother  
                  Jesus
- 5            Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry his cross  
                  Simon of Cyrene
- 6            Veronica wipes the face of Jesus  
                  Veronica
- 7            Jesus falls a second time  
                  A Pharisee

- 8 Jesus comforts the women of Jerusalem  
Jesus
- 9 Jesus falls a third time  
A Zealot
- 10 Jesus is stripped of his garments  
John
- 11 Jesus is nailed to the cross  
A Thief
- 12 Jesus dies on the cross  
Jesus
- 13 The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross  
Mary
- 14 Jesus is laid in the tomb  
Joseph of Arimathea

***Closing prayer***

Most merciful God  
 who by the death and resurrection of your son Jesus Christ  
 delivered and saved mankind:  
 grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross  
 we may triumph in the power of his victory  
 through Jesus Christ our Lord  
 Amen

Hymn 499                      There is a green hill far away

***Blessing***

Most merciful God  
 who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ  
 delivered and saved mankind:  
 grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross  
 we may triumph in the power of his victory  
 through Jesu Christ our Lord.  
 Amen



On Easter Day, we will have the chance to hear the 15<sup>th</sup> Station:  
 The Resurrection  
 Mary Magdalene

# 1 'Jesus is condemned to death'

## *Pontius Pilate*

He has to die.  
There is no other way.  
What would you do if you were me ?  
The situation here is unstable enough  
without another riot on my hands.  
Better to silence the crowd  
with the blood of an innocent man  
than risk blood on the streets again.  
Here I am, Governor of Judea,  
backed into a corner  
by Priests and Pharisees !  
Jesus of Nazareth  
would now be free  
with a Passover pardon  
but for the crowd  
shouting for his blood.  
So blood is what they'll have  
but not on my hands.  
I wash them in public  
to show I'm not responsible  
for the death of their King.  
What is truth ?  
I asked him.  
He never answered.  
But the simple truth is this:  
I allow an innocent man  
to go to his death.

## 2 Jesus is made to bear his cross

### *A soldier*

Another lamb for the slaughter;  
another Jew to die on a cross.  
But this one's different:  
his own people want his blood !  
So, just this once it seems  
we're doing them a favour.  
From the palace, we take him  
down to the praetorium  
where we can have some fun with him.  
They call him 'King of the Jews'  
so we treat him . . . 'royally'.  
First, we strip him naked  
then dress him in scarlet.  
We crown him with thorns  
and give him a reed for a sceptre.  
Then we kneel to salute him;  
"Hail, King of the Jews !"  
We kiss him,  
spit in his face  
and grabbing his 'sceptre',  
slash it across his cheek.  
We have our fun with him  
till it's time to go.  
We remove the scarlet robe –  
no sense spoiling good cloth –  
give him his clothes back  
and his crosspiece to carry,  
then send him out to die.

### 3 Jesus falls the first time

#### *A Sadducee*

Jesus stumbles and falls.  
The weight of the wood he carries  
presses him down to the ground.  
Let it be so for all who break our Law.  
This man, not one of us,  
an outsider from Galilee,  
dares to challenge our priesthood.  
By what authority does he preach ?  
By what right does he overturn  
the tables of our money changers,  
drive out our sellers of sacrifice ?  
A den of thieves, a cave of robbers,  
he calls our Holy Place  
which he boasts he'll tear down  
and rebuild in three days !  
Clearly, the man is mad,  
a dangerous revolutionary  
who puts the peace of our nation at risk,  
endangering our accommodation with Rome.  
We have no choice but to crush him  
just as this wood does now.  
He claims that after death,  
there is a life to come.  
Now he has the chance to show us  
and we the chance to see.

#### 4 Jesus meets his blessed mother

##### *Jesus*

"Mother," is all I can say.  
"Mother," – one word  
before they move me on  
but one word says it all.  
Mary, full of grace,  
blessed among women,  
handmaid of the Lord,  
virgin mother of God,  
Theotokos – the God bearer.  
You were little more than a girl  
when you welcomed the angel,  
welcomed me into your womb,  
welcomed me into the world.  
And the price of such service ?  
The pain of knowing I was different,  
set apart to do God's will.  
How proud you were in Jerusalem  
to find me with Doctors of the Law.  
How proud at the wedding in Cana  
when I changed water into wine.  
Now, here, you see me led off to die.  
Is there no end to a mother's pain ?  
I would comfort you if I could  
as you suffer there in silence,  
watching me, your son, led off to die.  
No words of mine can reach you now  
but though you can't hear or see it,  
All will be well, Mary, my mother,  
my own dear mother.

## 5 Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his cross

### *Simon*

Passover in Jerusalem !  
That's why I'm here with my boys,  
Alexander and Rufus, my sons,  
in the right place at the right time  
with the city crowded with pilgrims  
when we see some soldiers ahead  
giving some poor soul grief  
as he struggles under the weight  
of a piece of wood he's carrying.  
We step back out of their way  
just as his legs give way.  
I'm feeling sorry for the man,  
wondering what he's done,  
when a soldier grabs me and tells me  
to pick up the wood and to follow them.  
I don't argue. I do as I'm told.  
But it's not good to be made to work  
on a festival marking our freedom !  
But I'm still strong and my boys follow on  
as I shoulder the cross out of the city  
while the man in front of me stumbles.  
My job done, we don't hang around.  
But later on, we find out  
just who I've been helping -  
Jesus of Nazareth !  
If what they say about him  
is true, then this Passover,  
I've helped the Lamb of God.

## 6 Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

### *Veronica*

My house is on the Golgotha road  
where I wait for him to pass,  
the man who cured me of my curse,  
the constant flow of menstrual blood.  
Twelve years I spent, wasting my money  
on doctors who had no idea what to do !  
I was always unclean, permanently impure,  
not fit to be in the company of men.  
In desperation, I sought him out,  
but how could I, a woman, touch a Rabbi ?  
Surrounded by a crowd, he walked towards me.  
I stood still, waiting for him to pass,  
And, as he did, I touched his garment.  
Immediately, the blood dried up – I was clean.  
"Who touched me ?" He knew !  
In spite of the crowd pressing in on him,  
he knew. Terrified, I came forward,  
but he only smiled at me.  
My faith had made me well, he said.  
This one last time, I want to touch him  
as he stumbles towards me, exhausted.  
I step out to wipe the sweat from his eyes  
and he looks at me and smiles.  
I step back.  
He moves on.  
As I look at him go,  
I clutch the cloth to me,  
his face imprinted on my soul.

## 7 Jesus falls a second time

### *A Pharisee*

Again, Jesus stumbles and falls !  
Let it be so for all who prove themselves  
stumbling blocks to the Children of Israel.  
We protect our people from wrong doing,  
from falling short of what is right and proper,  
separating ourselves from what is unclean  
by planting the hedge of the Law around us  
to determine every action in every case.  
But Jesus sets himself up against us,  
neither respecting our knowledge  
nor our understanding of the Law,  
challenging the rules by which we act.  
By what authority does he act,  
this poor, wandering Rabbi ?  
He abuses the Sabbath;  
he eats with sinners;  
he exorcises unclean spirits  
with the aid of Satan himself.  
He may be popular with ignorant folk  
but he refuses to give us a sign  
and he scorns our desire  
to obey each letter of the Law.  
He even claims he can forgive sins !  
So who does he think he is ?  
Such blasphemy deserves death  
and death will be his reward.  
Then we'll see who truly serves  
Adonai, the Most High.

## 8 Jesus comforts the women of Jerusalem

### Jesus

I'm weary : how hard each step  
that takes me to my rest.  
The crowd jeers and shouts  
while a group of women stand and weep.  
Daughters of Jerusalem,  
do not weep for me.  
Weep for yourselves, for your children,  
for the day of trouble is coming  
when it will be better to be barren  
than breast-feed your babies !  
When disaster strikes,  
there will be nowhere to hide.  
Daughters of Jerusalem,  
do not weep for me.  
Weep for those responsible  
who do this in the name of God,  
blind guides, cloaked in darkness,  
who lead the people into the mire  
where no firm footing is.  
Daughters of Jerusalem,  
do not weep for me.  
I go to do my Father's will.  
He will wipe away all tears  
and death shall be no more;  
neither will there be mourning  
nor pain nor crying any more.  
Daughters of Jerusalem,  
weep not for me.

## 9 Jesus falls a third time

### *A Zealot*

Again, he stumbles and falls.  
If only Jesus had seized the time  
and had given us a sign,  
our people would have risen  
to overthrow the Romans.  
We had such hope in him !  
He was different.  
He taught with authority,  
an enemy of Priests and Pharisees alike.  
But he cared for our people,  
fed them in the wilderness  
with more than the word of God –  
bread like manna from heaven !  
When he rode in triumph into Jerusalem,  
we went wild and shouted for him,  
'Hosanna to the Son of David !  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord !'  
Then he drove the money changers from the Temple !  
This was the dawning of the Golden Age we sought !  
But when he said we should pay taxes to Caesar  
and told us, when angry, to turn the other cheek,  
to love our enemies as we love our friends  
and to treat any foreigner as one of us,  
we knew Jesus had betrayed us.  
So our man turned him in  
and now he goes to die –  
the fate the traitor deserves !

## 10 Jesus is stripped of his garments

### *John*

How could it come to this ?  
They make you stand naked  
in public, stripped of your clothes  
to rob you of your dignity,  
a last humiliation before you die,  
to shame you in our eyes,  
to steal our respect for you,  
devalue what you taught.  
But what impresses the crowd  
is not your body but your presence.  
The first time I saw you,  
I was working on my father's boat,  
mending our nets with my brother, James.  
You called across to us; "Follow me," you said,  
"and I will make you fishers of men."  
There was something in your voice  
that made the invitation irresistible:  
the call to find my true vocation.  
Three years now I've known you  
and you've taught me so much,  
my teacher and my friend.  
You've loved me as a father might his son.  
Last night, I sat at table  
my head on your shoulder  
and you spoke of a greater love –  
the sacrifice of a man's life for his friends.  
Now you stand exposed to this hostile air  
for the truth of your words to be fulfilled.

## 11 Jesus is nailed to the cross

### *A Thief*

'Jesus, remember me,  
when you come into your kingdom.'  
He's my last hope  
but I meant what I said.  
We were standing naked on the hill,  
shivering in the heat, waiting our turn.  
They grabbed him first, pushed him down,  
held him down against the wood  
like a piece of wood, not a man,  
as each nail is hammered in.  
It's not right. It's not fair.  
I don't want to die  
but if you're caught,  
you know what you get.  
But what did he do ?  
He taught people about God,  
our God who loves us  
like a father loves his son.  
Dangerous to talk like that:  
to suggest that people like me  
can be forgiven, our faults excused.  
In pain, my mate makes fun of him,  
so I tell him to shut it.  
Then to Jesus I say, 'Remember me,  
when you come into your kingdom.'  
And he promises me, promises ME,  
that today, I'll be with him in paradise.  
If only . . . if only . . .

## 12 Jesus dies on the cross

### *Jesus*

*'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.'*

They're just obeying orders  
with little thought of the consequences,  
simply instruments of another man's will,  
void of understanding. Father, forgive them.

*'In truth today you will dine with me in paradise.'*

For your simple act of kindness,  
for your compassion for a fellow sufferer,  
for your plea to be forgiven,  
today, you shall be with me in heaven.

*'Behold your son; behold your mother.'*

Two people whom I love most  
I leave to care one for the other –  
my mother and the son I never had.  
In each other, may they find comfort.

*'My God, my God why have you forsaken me ?'*

The burden of sin weighs heavily upon me.  
I'm covered in the slime of unnumbered, nameless acts  
whose sticky, sweet corruption clots my very sense of God.  
Father, my Father, . . . where are you ?

*'I thirst.'*

My mouth is as dry as the Wilderness  
where once I walked to test your will for me.  
When will your living water, which flowed through me,  
restore me to your presence ?

*'It is finished.'*

I lack the strength  
to push on the wood  
to take the weight  
off my chest  
each breath  
a struggle  
I can't  
go on

*'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.'*

### 13 The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross

#### *Mary*

Lifeless, I cradle you one last time in my aching arms,  
my son, the boy I loved, the man I knew was different.  
There's no end to the love of a mother for her son.  
When Gabriel spoke of you, I loved the thought of you  
and, as I held you to my breast that first time,  
in my heart I knew how special you were.  
I knew the night shepherds came speaking of angels,  
telling them to come to Bethlehem to seek a child  
wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.  
I knew the day wisemen from the East arrived  
with gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.  
My son, who could you be but the Son of God,  
born to a girl who'd never known a man ?  
Simeon said that you would pierce my heart  
like a sharp sword might pierce my flesh  
and now holding your bruised and bleeding body,  
heavy in my loving arms, I feel how right he is.  
You came to bring the love of God to Man  
but who wants to hear what you have to say ?  
Instead, they silence you by killing you -  
no one speaks from the grave.  
Once these tired arms of mine rocked you to sleep  
and now, tenderly, they caress you one last time.  
Why can't a mother give life to her son a second time ?  
How weary I am of my life and your loss.  
How long must I go on ?

## 14 Jesus is laid in the tomb

### *Joseph of Arimathea*

Pilate allows me to remove the body of Jesus  
and to give him a decent burial.

Under Roman Law, I have the right to do so  
on behalf of Mary, my niece, his mother.

I pay the soldiers to take him from the cross  
and my servants carry him from Golgotha  
to the Mount of Olives and my garden tomb  
where all is ready, laid out to receive him.

Nicodemus, our friend, has provided the spices  
and I fine linen for his shroud.

First, we wash his body with fresh water  
to cleanse it of sweat and blood,  
the indignities of painful death.

With due respect, we anoint his body,  
then carefully reclothe him in fine linen.

We say kaddish, commit him to the Lord,  
the last service we can pay this man we love.

May he rest in peace in a tomb meant for me.

We roll back the stone to seal the sepulchre,  
then pause briefly, in silence, out of respect  
for him who taught us about the Father  
and what it might mean to follow Him.

In the west, the sun is sinking;  
its light begins to fail, leaving us bereft.

Tonight, will the angel of death pass over ?

Has sufficient blood been shed ?

What now will become of us ?

## 15 Resurrection

### *Mary Magdalene*

'Don't cling to me.'  
Hard not to  
when I thought  
I never could again.  
I'd seen him die.  
I knew him dead.  
I'd come to mourn  
at the tomb where he lay.  
I couldn't sleep.  
I got up early before dawn  
and in the half light saw  
the stone rolled away,  
the tomb lying open.  
In shock, in panic,  
I ran back,  
found Peter and John,  
told them what I saw.  
Off they ran  
while I trailed behind.  
It was as I feared:  
his body was gone;  
the tomb was empty.  
Who had taken him ?  
Where had he gone ?  
I was left on my own  
But I wasn't alone !  
Two strangers in white  
sat there asking me

why I was crying.  
A gardener,  
standing there,  
asked the same.  
I asked him,  
'Where have they taken his body ?'  
He replied, one word, my name,  
'Mary'.  
Through my tears,  
I heard it was him.  
'Rabboni !'  
I wanted to hug him,  
to hold him tight  
and never let him go  
but who can hold a dream ?  
He told me not to cling to him  
and to let him go to the Father.  
Hard to let go of one you love  
But now I have a job to do:  
to tell others what I've seen,  
to spread the good news:  
Jesus is risen from the dead.  
He is alive today.