

# ***Six Stages of Suffering***

## ***A Meditation of John 19 for Good Friday***

**Sentences** (Isaiah 53: 4 - 5)

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his stripes we are healed.

**Music for Meditation**

**Opening Prayer**

### **Meditation of Readings and Prayers**

#### **The Rejected Christ**

**Reading:** John 19: 1 - 2, 13 – 16

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. Pilate brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, 'Here is your King!' They cried out, 'Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but the emperor.' Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

#### **Prayer**

Jesus was rejected by the people he had come to save. Instead of crying for freedom and life they shouted for death. Jesus told us that if we are to follow him, we too will be rejected by the world. Forgive us for failing to follow Christ. Forgive us for choosing the false promises of the world.

We pray for: those who are rejected, the abused child, the refugee ..... ..  
Help us to welcome the outcast and befriend the stranger.

#### **Response**

**L:** Father into your hands we commit our thoughts and prayers

**All:** Receive them, for as you receive us, through the cross of Christ, our Lord.

#### **The Cross of Christ**

**Reading:** John 19: 17 – 18

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

### **Prayer**

Jesus took his cross - He also took the cross of others. Jesus told us to take up our cross and follow him. It is too hard for us. Forgive us, Lord. Forgive us for not being prepared to suffer, always wanting an easy life.

We pray for: those who suffer for righteousness sake .....  
Help us to suffer as you suffered and to bear the suffering of the world.

### **Response**

**L:** Father into your hands we commit our thoughts and prayers

**All:** Receive them, as you receive us, through the cross of Christ, our Lord.

## **The Kingship of Christ**

**Reading:** John 19: 19 – 22

Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews", but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews. "' Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.'

### **Prayer**

Jesus is proclaimed King by his judge. He is the king of life, and the king of our lives. But we live our lives as if we only have to answer to ourselves. Forgive us for putting ourselves first and ignoring others.

We pray for: the rulers and governments of the world, all in authority .....  
Rule in our hearts, Jesus, this day and every day so that you are not just proclaimed as King of the Jews but king of all.

### **Response**

**L:** Father into your hands we commit our thoughts and prayers

**All:** Receive them, as you receive us, through the cross of Christ, our Lord.

## **The Dividing of Christ**

**Reading:** John 19: 23 – 25

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfil what the scripture says, 'They divided my clothes among themselves and for my clothing they cast lots.' And that is what the soldiers did.

### **Prayer**

As the soldiers divided Christ's garments, so we have divided Christ. The Church has become many separate parts and we have each taken a part of Christ and used

it for our own purposes. Forgive us. Forgive us for being inward looking and for retreating into our traditions

We pray for the Church .....

Unite us together, so that we can be a church that is not divided and we may repair the garment that we have torn.

### **Response**

**L:** Father into your hands we commit our thoughts and prayers

**All:** Receive them, as you receive us, through the cross of Christ, our Lord.

## **The Brotherhood of Christ**

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

### **Prayer**

Jesus, you are a brother to us all and you have united us all in one family, a multicoloured family of many cultures and languages, but sharing the same humanity.

We pray for: the nations of the world that are in conflict .....

Make us one family throughout the world that we may all be gathered together around your cross as one family in love.

### **Response**

**L:** Father into your hands we commit our thoughts and prayers

**All:** Receive them, as you receive us, through the cross of Christ, our Lord.

## **The Spirit of Christ**

**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.' 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. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

### **Prayer**

Jesus, you gave up your spirit. You returned to God. But your act of giving was the greatest act of all. As you gave your body for the world, so you gave your spirit that we might live with you for ever.

We pray for: the world that has lost its spirit, to materialism and greed.  
for those who are seeking for new dimensions of spirituality .....

Send us your Holy Spirit this day that we may be revitalised. Through your presence, encourage us and all your people, showing us that Christ is not dead on Calvary but alive, living with us forever.

### **Response**

**L:** Father into your hands we commit your world, this day  
into your hands we commit your people, this day  
into your hands we commit ourselves, this day  
into your hands we commit our thoughts and prayers

**All:** Receive them, as you receive us, through the cross of Christ, our Lord.

### **Blessing**

Be the cross of Christ upon our world;  
Be the cross of Christ upon our church;  
Be the cross of Christ upon our homes;  
Be the cross of Christ upon each one of us.  
Be the cross of Christ upon this day;  
Be the cross of Christ upon this night;  
Be the cross of Christ upon our lives;  
Be the cross of Christ with us at death.  
Be the grace of Christ forever before us;  
Be the love of God forever around us  
Be the peace of the Spirit forever within us  
Be the Blessing of the Trinity ours forever.

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