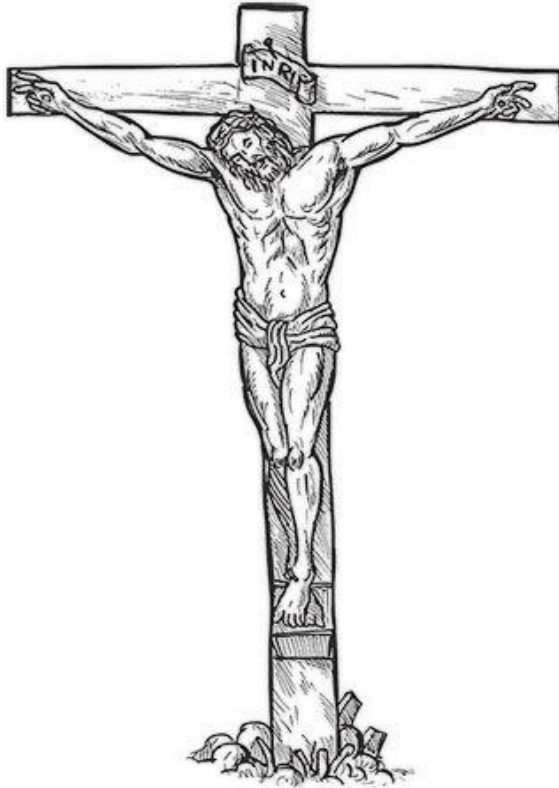


St. Alban's Church, Wickersley



# The Cross of Christ

A Good Friday Devotion

**Welcome** to this Good Friday devotion, 'The Cross of Christ.'

We gather in quiet reflection and solemn remembrance. We come to stand at the foot of the cross, to contemplate the depth of Christ's love, and to enter into the mystery of his suffering and sacrifice. This is a day of stillness, of honesty, and of grace—a time to pause amid the noise of life and attend to the profound truth at the heart of our faith.

As we journey through this service, may we draw near with reverence and openness. May we hear again the story of the cross not as distant history, but as living truth that speaks into our lives today. And may we discover anew the love of God revealed in Christ, who gave himself for the life of the world.

We are invited to take this time to reflect, to pray, and to be still in the presence of God.

At the end of the service, we are invited to leave the church in silence. You are welcome to remain in church after the service for some quiet time of prayer and reflection.

The service begins in silence. **We stand** as the ministers and choir enter.

A large wooden cross is placed in a prominent position.

We remain standing.

On the cross, Jesus offered himself to the Father for the whole world. At the foot of his cross, we join our prayers with his. We glory in your cross, O Lord, and praise and glorify your holy resurrection: **for by virtue of the cross, joy has come to the whole world.**

God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, **that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.**

We glory in your cross, O Lord, and praise and glorify your holy resurrection: **for by virtue of the cross, joy has come to the whole world.**

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.**

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

As our Saviour has taught us, so we pray:

We sit or kneel.

**Our Father, which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come.  
Thy will be done in earth,  
As it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive them that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
The power, and the glory,  
For ever and ever.  
Amen.**

## **Hymn**

*We stand to sing.*

**There is a green hill far away,  
outside a city wall,  
where the dear Lord was crucified,  
who died to save us all.**

**We may not know, we cannot tell,  
what pains he had to bear;  
but we believe it was for us  
he hung and suffered there.**

**He died that we might be forgiv'n,  
he died to make us good,  
that we might go at last to heav'n,  
saved by his precious blood.**

**There was no other good enough  
to pay the price of sin;  
he only could unlock the gate  
of heav'n, and let us in.**

**O dearly, dearly has he loved,  
and we must love him too,  
and trust in his redeeming blood,  
and try his works to do.**

*We sit.*

## **THE CROSS IS FORETOLD**

### **Reading**

He was despised and rejected by mankind,  
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.  
Like one from whom people hide their faces  
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.  
Surely he took up our pain  
and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him punished by God,  
stricken by him, and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.  
We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to our own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.  
He was oppressed and afflicted,  
yet he did not open his mouth;  
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,

and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.  
By oppression and judgment he was taken away.  
Yet who of his generation protested?  
For he was cut off from the land of the living;  
for the transgression of my people he was punished.

*Isaiah 53: 3-8*

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

## **Choir Anthem**

Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.

*F. Ousley*

## **Hymn**

*We stand to sing.*

**Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle,  
sing the last, the dread affray;  
o'er the cross, the victor's trophy,  
sound the high triumphal lay,  
how, the pains of death enduring,  
earth's Redeemer won the day.**

**When at length the appointed fulness  
of the sacred time was come,  
he was sent, the world's Creator,  
from the Father's heavenly home,  
and was found in human fashion,  
offspring of the virgin's womb.**

**Now the thirty years are ended  
which on earth he willed to see,  
willingly he meets his passion,  
born to set his people free;  
on the cross the Lamb is lifted,  
there the sacrifice to be.**

**There the nails and spear He suffers,  
vinegar and gall and reed;  
from His sacred body pierced  
blood and water both proceed:  
precious flood, which all creation  
from the stain of sin hath freed.**

*We sit.*

## **JESUS IS BETRAYED**

### **Reading**

<sup>32</sup> They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' <sup>33</sup> He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. <sup>34</sup> 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,' he said to them. 'Stay here and keep watch.'

<sup>35</sup> Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. <sup>36</sup> 'Abba, Father,' he said, 'everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.'

<sup>37</sup> Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. 'Simon,' he said to Peter, 'are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour?' <sup>38</sup> Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

<sup>39</sup> Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. <sup>40</sup> When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

<sup>41</sup> Returning the third time, he said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. <sup>42</sup> Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!'

<sup>43</sup> Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

<sup>44</sup> Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: 'The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.' <sup>45</sup> Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him. <sup>46</sup> The men seized Jesus and arrested him.

<sup>47</sup> Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

<sup>48</sup> 'Am I leading a rebellion,' said Jesus, 'that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? <sup>49</sup> Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.' <sup>50</sup> Then everyone deserted him and fled.

*Matthew 14: 32-50*

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

## Choir Anthem

Lord, for thy tender mercy's sake, lay not our sins to our charge,  
but forgive that is past, and give us grace to amend our sinful lives.  
To decline from sin and incline to virtue, that we may walk in a  
perfect heart before thee this night and evermore.

*R. Farrant*

## Hymn

*We stand to sing.*

**Be thou my guardian and my guide,  
And hear me when I call;  
Let not my slippery footsteps slide,  
And hold me lest I fall.**

**The world, the flesh, and Satan dwell  
Around the path I tread;  
O, save me from the snares of hell,  
Thou quickener of the dead.**

**And if I tempted am to sin,  
And outward things are strong,  
Do thou, O Lord, keep watch within,  
And save my soul from wrong.**

**Still let me ever watch and pray,  
And feel that I am frail;  
That if the tempter cross my way,  
Yet he may not prevail.**

*We sit.*

# JESUS BROUGHT BEFORE HIGH PRIEST

## Reading

<sup>57</sup> Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. <sup>58</sup> But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome. <sup>59</sup> The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. <sup>60</sup> But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward <sup>61</sup> and declared, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.’”

<sup>62</sup> Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?” <sup>63</sup> But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.”

<sup>64</sup> “You have said so,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” <sup>65</sup> Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. <sup>66</sup> What do you think?”

“He is worthy of death,” they answered.

<sup>67</sup> Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him <sup>68</sup> and said, “Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?”

*Matthew 26.57–68*

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

## Choir Anthem

O Lord, who dares to smite thee, and falsely to indict thee,  
deride and mock thee so? Thou canst not need confession,  
who knowest not transgression, as we and all our children know.

*J.S. Bach*

## Hymn

*We stand to sing.*

**My God, I love thee; not because  
I hope for heaven thereby,  
Nor yet because who love thee not  
Are lost eternally.**

**Thou, O my Jesus, thou didst me  
Upon the Cross embrace;  
For me didst bear the nails and spear,  
And manifold disgrace.**

**And griefs and torments numberless,  
And sweat of agony;  
Yea, death itself; and all for me  
Who was thine enemy.**

**Then why, O blessed Jesu Christ,  
Should I not love thee well?  
Not for the sake of winning heaven,  
Nor of escaping hell;**

**Not from the hope of gaining aught,  
Not seeking a reward;  
But as thyself hast loved me,  
O ever-loving Lord!**

**So would I love thee, dearest Lord,  
And in thy praise will sing,  
Solely because thou art my God,  
And my most loving King.**

*We sit.*

## **JESUS IS TRIED BEFORE PILATE**

### **Reading**

<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“You have said so,” Jesus replied.

<sup>12</sup> When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. <sup>13</sup> Then Pilate asked him, “Don’t you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?” <sup>14</sup> But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

<sup>15</sup> Now it was the governor’s custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. <sup>16</sup> At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> Barabbas. <sup>17</sup> So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, “Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” <sup>18</sup> For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

<sup>19</sup> While Pilate was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him this message: “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.”

<sup>20</sup> But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

<sup>21</sup> “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” asked the governor.

“Barabbas,” they answered.

<sup>22</sup> “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” Pilate asked.

They all answered, “Crucify him!”

<sup>23</sup> “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”

<sup>24</sup> When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It is your responsibility!”

<sup>25</sup> All the people answered, “His blood is on us and on our children!”

<sup>26</sup> Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

<sup>27</sup> Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. <sup>28</sup> They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, <sup>29</sup> and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. <sup>30</sup> They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. <sup>31</sup> After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

*Matthew 27: 11-31*

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

## Choir Anthem

Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended,  
That man to judge thee hath in hate pretended?  
By foes derided, by thine own rejected, O most afflicted.

Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee?  
Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee.  
'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee: I crucified thee.

Lo, the good Shepherd for the sheep is offered;  
The slave hath sinnèd, and the Son hath suffered;  
For man's atonement, while he nothing heedeth, God intercedeth.

*J.S. Bach*

## Hymn

*We stand to sing.*

**My song is love unknown,  
My Saviour's love to me,  
Love to the loveless shown,  
That they might lovely be.  
O, who am I,  
That for my sake  
My Lord should take  
Frail flesh, and die?**

**He came from his blest throne,  
Salvation to bestow:  
But man refused, and none  
The longed-for Christ would know.  
But O, my Friend,  
My Friend indeed,  
Who at my need  
His life did spend!**

**Sometimes they strew his way,  
And his sweet praises sing;  
Resounding all the day  
Hosannas to their King.  
Then 'Crucify!'  
Is all their breath,  
And for his death  
They thirst and cry.**

**They rise, and needs will have  
My dear Lord made away;  
A murderer they save,  
The Prince of Life they slay.  
Yet cheerful he  
To suffering goes,  
That he his foes  
From thence might free.**

**Here might I stay and sing,  
No story so divine;  
Never was love, dear King,  
Never was grief like thine!  
This is my Friend,  
In whose sweet praise  
I all my days  
Could gladly spend.**

*We sit.*

# JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

## Reading

<sup>33</sup> They came to a place called Golgotha (which means ‘the place of the skull’). <sup>34</sup> There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. <sup>35</sup> When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. <sup>36</sup> And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. <sup>37</sup> Above his head they placed the written charge against him: this is Jesus, the king of the jews. <sup>38</sup> Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>39</sup> Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads <sup>40</sup> and saying, ‘You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!’ <sup>41</sup> In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. <sup>42</sup> ‘He saved others,’ they said, ‘but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. <sup>43</sup> He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, “I am the Son of God.”’ <sup>44</sup> In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

*Matthew 27: 33-44*

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

## Choir Anthem

Jesu, word of God incarnate, of the Virgin Mary born; on the cross thy sacred body, for us men with nails was torn. Cleanse us by the blood and water streaming from thy pierced side. Feed us with thy body broken, now and in death’s agony.

*(Translated) W.A. Mozart*

# Hymn

*We stand to sing.*

**O Sacred head, sore wounded,  
defied and put to scorn;  
O Kingly head, surrounded  
with mocking crown of thorn:  
What sorrow mars thy grandeur?  
Can death thy bloom deflower?  
O countenance whose splendour  
the host of heaven adore.**

**I pray thee, Jesus, own me,  
Me, Shepherd good, for thine;  
Who to thy fold hast won me,  
And fed with truth divine.  
Me guilty, me refuse not,  
Incline thy face to me,  
this comfort that I lose not,  
on Earth to comfort thee.**

*We sit.*

# JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

## Reading

<sup>33</sup> At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. <sup>34</sup> And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ (which means ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’).

<sup>35</sup> When some of those standing near heard this, they said, ‘Listen, he’s calling Elijah.’

<sup>36</sup> Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ‘Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down,’ he said.

<sup>37</sup> With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

## **(Silence is kept)**

<sup>38</sup> The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. <sup>39</sup> And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, ‘Surely this man was the Son of God!’

*Mark 15: 33-39*

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

## Choir Anthem

O Saviour of the world, who by thy cross and precious blood has redeemed us, save us, and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord.  
Amen.

*J. Goss*

# Hymn

*We stand to sing.*

**O dearest Lord, thy sacred head  
With thorns was pierced for me;  
O pour thy blessing on my head  
That I may think for thee.**

**O dearest Lord, thy sacred hands  
With nails were pierced for me;  
O shed thy blessing on my hands  
That they may work for thee.**

**O dearest Lord, thy sacred feet  
With nails were pierced for me;  
O pour thy blessing on my feet  
That they may follow thee.**

**O dearest Lord, thy sacred heart  
With spear was pierced for me;  
O pour thy Spirit in my heart  
That I may live for thee.**

*We remain standing.*

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who at this evening hour lay in the tomb and so hallowed the grave to be a bed of hope for all who put their trust in you: give us such sorrow for our sins, which were the cause of your passion, that when our bodies lie in the dust, our souls may live with you for ever. **Amen.**

*We sit.*

# CHRIST TRIUMPHANT

## Reading

<sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

<sup>6</sup> who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.

<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to death –  
even death on a cross!

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

*Philippians 2:5-11*

We adore you, O Christ and we bless you,

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

# Hymn

*We stand to sing.*

**Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise,  
In all his words most wonderful,  
Most sure in all his ways.**

**O loving wisdom of our God!  
When all was sin and shame,  
A second Adam to the fight  
And to the rescue came.**

**O wisest love! that flesh and blood,  
Which did in Adam fail,  
Should strive afresh against the foe,  
Should strive and should prevail;**

**And that a higher gift than grace  
Should flesh and blood refine,  
God's presence and his very self,  
And essence all-divine.**

**And in the garden secretly,  
And on the cross on high,  
Should teach his brethren, and inspire  
To suffer and to die.**

**Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
And in the depth be praise,  
In all his words most wonderful,  
Most sure in all his ways.**

*We remain standing.*

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.**

## **The Blessing**

May the Father, who so loved the world that he gave his only Son, bring you by faith to his eternal life. **Amen.**

May Christ, who accepted the cup of sacrifice in obedience to the Father's will, keep you steadfast as you walk with him the way of his cross. **Amen**

May the Spirit, who strengthens us to suffer with Christ that we may share his glory, set your minds on life and peace. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

## **Closing Hymn**

*We remain standing to sing.*

**When I survey the wondrous cross  
on which the Prince of glory died,  
my richest gain I count but loss,  
and pour contempt on all my pride.**

**Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
save in the cross of Christ my God;  
all the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to his blood.**

**See from his head, his hands, his feet,  
sorrow and love flow mingled down;  
did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
or thorns compose so rich a crown!**

**Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
that were an offering far too small;  
love so amazing, so divine,  
demands my soul, my life, my all.**

***The ministers and choir recess in silence.***

*You are welcome to remain in church after this devotion for as long as you like  
for quiet meditation and prayer; please do not feel the need to rush.*

*Please leave the church in silence as a sign or respect.*