

Meditations and Reflections for Holy Week

1. Government and health advisors: Jesus is condemned to death.



Read: Matthew 27: 11-26

Reflect:

Pilate has only come down from the city today. He doesn't like these countryside occasions much but the crowds are restless, noisy and behaving badly. I can see my oak Cross already prepared, propped up by the tall brick tower; I can see him and hear him joking that there's plenty of water here to wash his hands. There is a lot of fear. I can see Pilate, making a decision to hand me over to the crowd to be crucified. Who is in power? Who has the authority to make wise decisions?

Pray:

For a kinder, more collegial political life. Give thanks for all our emergency services, their sacrifices, and all who fetch and carry for others. **Lord, have mercy...**

2. The Croft & St Mary's churchyard & Holy Trinity Grounds.: The crown of thorns and the heavy cross.

Read: Mark 15: 16-20

Reflect: Our community places.



This is a place of recreation and with panoramic views; much greener and safer than Golgotha. There are children on swings, dog-walkers everywhere. Village events. Loved ones sitting on memorial benches. Games of cricket and stoolball. So much activity and busy-ness. A place where our village Fetes take place. Our community cafés buzz with cake and coffee. People gather to remember loved ones. There are signs of seriousness and signs of laughter. Jesus takes hold of a cross that has turned into a huge weight, a burden to bear as he walks to his crucifixion. The journey has begun.

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?

In a moment of quiet pray for strength and grace to build up our communities in new ways.

Pray:

Give thanks for all our village societies and connections. Those who work so hard to build up our community life. For the beauty all around us and for all those listening and keeping in touch with others by phone, or a visit. **Glory be to the Father...**

3. St Mary's CE Primary School:

Read: Luke 22: 54-61 &
Luke 23: 34

Reflect:

The Lychgate is old and the pavement narrow. Some children skip along others ride their bikes and scooters. Snatched conversations. But now all is silent. The playground is quiet. Jesus walks down the path. But after just a few yards, his burden feels heavy and he stumbles just near the entrance. He looks up from the floor and see there's a cockerel on the roof; where is my Peter now? Has he really gone fishing or just run away? Bad news is never easy if it is close-up on our screens or even nearer. We hide from suffering if we can. We pray for all war-torn parts of the world. For families and loved ones.



In a moment of quiet. Ask God to strengthen your faith. For the times we have tried to hide from God and yet longed for peace.

Pray for our children and young people. For their families. For all staff and Governors.

For those areas of our lives where we need to ask for forgiveness or offer out forgiveness to someone else.

Pray:

For all the times we have failed to reach out and help, and for those times we now regret when we could have done more to help and support. **Lamb of God...**

4. Our loved ones and neighbours: Jesus meets his mother



Read: Luke 19: 25-27

Reflect:

I was directed across the road. I could see my Mother looking out at me, wanting to reach out and touch me. Her heart looked broken and she appeared to be crying behind her veil. Her heart looked anguished. A couple of metres felt like we were a mile apart: from the one who held me in her arms and is still looking out for me: so dependable, faithful, and selfless her lasting love for me.

And a sword will pierce your heart also.

Pray:

For our families, and all whom we love. For those who live alone, especially in our local care homes. For those living in fear and those who are lifted up, praying for us. **Lord have mercy**

5.The War Memorial : Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his Cross.



Read: Mark 15.21 & John 15: 12-16

Reflect:

This always feel like the centre of the village, especially on Remembrance Sunday when it is so crowded, and every age group represented. Colours raised and wreaths held waiting to be gently laid in front of the cross. Here is Simon, part of the crowd. It is as if a complete stranger has come rushing out of that very crowd not with poppies though, but with outstretched hands to support my aching bones and shoulders. This was Simon. Stepping forward to ease my pain. This is my command. Love one another.

Lord, show us someone whose cross we may help to carry.

Pray:

For all who carry our burdens; we ask the Lord to help us see Christ in every helping hand. For the work of our social services, counsellors and all caring for our mental well-being. For our shopkeepers and farmers. Where can we lift the burden from someone today? **As you pray, take a moment to offer out your own concerns and anxieties to the Lord.**

Our Father...

6. Holtye Hartfield and Coleman's Hatch: Faith Hope and Love



Read: I Corinthians 13.12-13

Reflect:

Christ's example of faith hope and love are being lived out in our villages. Stand still for a moment and pray for those who live near you. Pray for those Doctors and nurses around you. Give huge thanks for our local shops. Our farm shop's. Perryhill; Nick the butcher; our volunteers and neighbours.

Keep the faith. Be carriers of Hope. Offer out love.

Pray:

For the churches across the world as they gather today to remember Christ's sacrifice for us on the cross. For those working tirelessly in our NHS especially our nurses and doctors; for all engaged in clinical testing and research. For the strangers who are there for us before we even ask. **Kyrie eleison... Lord have mercy**

7. Our Local Hospitals.: Jesus is stripped of his clothes

Read: John 19.23-27

Reflect:

There is no dignity in being stripped naked; It is hard to keep my dignity. My clothes are being divided.



Lots are being cast as I stand here in agony. I can see my family nearby. My heart is breaking but I have made provision for her. It will not be long now. The end is drawing closer.

Pray:

Give thanks for our local hospice movement, staff, volunteers and family caregivers. For our local surgery and hospitals in Crowborough and Pembury and East Grinstead. Pray for those who live on the edges of society and are caught up in addiction, homelessness, or crime. For prisoners, victims of abuse and refugees. And for all our charities working for their relief. **Lord, have mercy...**

For our funeral directors, clergy and church leaders who accompany the bereaved; all who comfort those who mourn, especially families we know. **Our Father...**

For the opportunities to hear the stories of all who are anxious or afraid of dying and to pray for them. That our help and support will be hands-on, and courageous. **Christ have mercy...**

Today, have conversations with your loved ones. Talk honestly. Tell them you love them. Share your stories of faith with each other.

8. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?: Jesus is nailed to the cross

Read: Mark 15: 21-41

Reflect:

It is dark in the middle of the day. It seems that the heavens and the earth are grieving. They tell us

that something is terribly wrong. Jesus, I hear you cry out in lament from the Psalms. I know it is the cry of human pain and desolation. Everyone has forsaken you – but there is one who still hears your prayer – the one you address as *my* God. The earth is shaking. It is too late. What have we done?

You never stopped loving us even in death. Sin is never the final word. We hope and we wait....

We wait at the foot of the cross. We know that death has lost its sting. There is the hope of new life around the corner.

Pray: No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand:
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Kyrie Eleison... Lord have mercy



9. Ashdown Forest: Jesus dies on the cross

Read: John 19.28-37

**Reflect: Jesus said:
I am thirsty; It is
finished;**



God had a plan and
my cross, you
know, made an
ordinary Friday, 'GOOD' My death was only a beginning of something
better, richer, and deeper to come, for the whole world.

There is a green hill far away,
without 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.

Pray:

Let us never stray too far from Christ's cross for in this end is our beginning: God's gift of redemption, forgiveness, and new Hope.

Let us pray for all the dying, especially those who are separated from their nearest and dearest. Those in our intensive care wards and all whose final rest is eternal.

10. : Jesus is taken down from the cross

Read: Luke 23.50-56

Reflect:

The hysterical clamour of the passion is now quiet. His bruised and blood stained body, marked with the wounds of nail and spear,



are hastily washed and wrapped in a clean linen shroud. Jesus is laid in the coldness of a stone tomb. No funeral procession. No elaborate mourning; and yet, Jesus is also being placed into God's everlasting arms as he is gently moved from his place of violation and execution.

We know, in just a few short hours, Jesus will emerge from the cold dark tomb. He will be victorious over sin and death.

Pray:

For all who have difficult or painful deaths. Victims of war or cruelty, famine or disease. Those who are fearful of death and long for life.

May we be like the thief of the cross. Recognising Jesus as our Saviour. "Jesus remember ME when you come into your kingdom."

11. Our own homes and our beautiful Ashdown Forest:



Read: Hebrews 4: 14-16. Let us hold firmly to our faith.

Reflect: We wait and pray. In the pain and the grief, new life is emerging every day. We hear the birdsong, we notice the way a flower grows. We have meaningful conversations with our families instead of being busy and shallow. Perhaps we have prayed more these past few weeks. Read our bibles and felt the Lord's presence in the silence.

Joseph comes to wrap Jesus body and place it in a tomb. The women followed and you feel their sadness. They go home to prepare the spices and perfumes and rest. Today, make sure you look after yourself. Ponder over these readings and pray. This is an opportunity to ask for healing of our own wounds. To know the enormous love of God from which we can never be separated. V16: Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Use the words of the hymn below to end your time of prayer

1. 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.
2. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.
3. 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?
4. Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

With love and prayers,

Rev Julie Sear

*(Stained Glass of the 'Stations of the Cross' by Albert Chavaz
from The "new church" of Vercorin, Switzerland)*