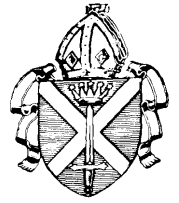




Methodist
Church

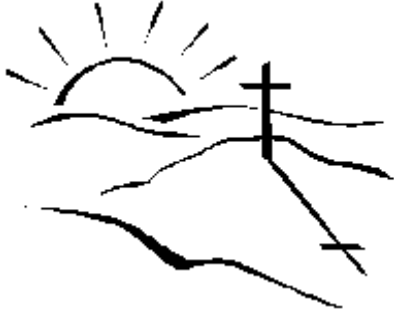
Good Friday

The Stations of the Cross



Church of
England

The Methodist Church & the Church of England in Partnership at both
Putnoe Heights Church & St. Mark's Church



On Good Friday 1991, Pope John Paul II, according to long standing papal tradition, led a crowd of people at the Roman Colosseum through the Stations of the Cross. However, he changed the format, altering the fourteen stations and adding a fifteenth. Some of the traditional ones were kept, while others were dropped and new ones inserted. All of the stations the Holy Father used had as their basis incidents recorded in the gospels.

Using this service we will follow through the last days in the life of our Lord and as we seek to die with Christ so may we also rise to new life on Easter Sunday. You may take this service and use it in your own prayer times.

Jesus said.

**'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves
and take up their cross and follow me...'**

Opening Sentence

God showed His love for us in that
while we were still sinners, Christ died for us
Romans Chapter 5 : 8

Opening Prayers

Minister: 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;
Lord we thank you for all the benefits you have won
for us. For all the pains and insults which you have
borne for us. Most merciful Redeemer, Friend and
Brother, may we by learning of the manner of your
life learn to follow in your steps of humility and
sacrifice.

**All: Lord Jesus Christ, take me along that
holy way you once took to your death.
Take my mind, my memory, above all my
reluctant heart, and let me see what once
you did for love of me and all the world.**

First Hymn

Confession & Responses

Lord Jesus Christ, we confess we have failed you as
did your first disciples. We ask you for your mercy
and your help

Our selfishness betrays you:

Lord, forgive:

Christ have mercy

We fail to share the pain of your suffering:

Lord, forgive:

Christ have mercy

We run away from those who abuse you:

Lord, forgive:

Christ have mercy

We are afraid of being known to belong to you:

Lord, forgive:

Christ have mercy

The Lord enrich you with his grace,
and nourish you with his blessing;
the Lord defend you in trouble
and keep you from evil;
the Lord accept your prayers,
and absolve you from your offences,
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. **Amen.**

Second Hymn

Offering

Lord God we offer you our thanks and praise and our lives in your service. Take us and use us to your praise and glory. Amen.



The First Station The Agony of Jesus in the Garden of Olives.

Bible Reading

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' He took with him Peter, James, and John, and he began to be troubled and distressed. Then he said to them, 'My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch.' He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; he said, 'Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will.'
Mark 14:32-36

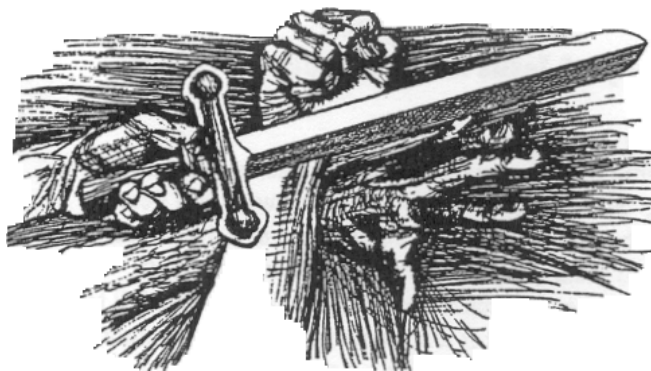
Meditation

Jesus felt sorrow and dread over what lay ahead of him. He prayed for the burden to be lifted and the cross to be removed, but only if the Father willed it so. When Christ saw clearly that he must drink of the bitter cup, then our Lord totally accepted his future. 'Not my will, but thine be done.' His example teaches us how to pray at all times, especially in the midst of our own crosses and cups of suffering.

The Second Station The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

Bible Reading

Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, 'The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead



him away securely.' He came and immediately went over to him and said, 'Rabbi.' And he kissed him. At this they laid hands on him and arrested him. *Mark 14:43-46*

Meditation

Rejection always hurts. It tears at our self-esteem and leaves us doubting our own worth. Even the turning down of a simple invitation can wound us. Betrayal, especially by a friend, hurts even more. Jesus had prayed all night before selecting his twelve apostles, including Judas. Judas had also been his companion for three years, hearing the Lord's words and observing his miraculous deeds. Now he betrays his Saviour with a kiss, and for pieces of silver. Remembering Jesus' hurt and pain in the garden can help us to deal with those times when we feel rejected and betrayed.

Third Hymn

The Third Station The Sanhedrin Condemns Jesus



Bible Reading

The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none.... The

high priest rose before the assembly and questioned Jesus saying, 'Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?' But he was silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him and said to him, 'Are you the Messiah, the son of the Blessed One?' Then Jesus answered, 'I am; and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.' At that the high priest tore his garments and said, 'What further need have we of witnesses?' *Mark 14:55,60-63*

Meditation

Envy and jealousy can be like cancerous diseases within us. They spread throughout our whole being, leading to uncharitable conversations, false accusations, and other destructive actions. We see all of this played out among the religious leaders of Jesus' time as they condemn Christ without basis. Our Lord offers a model for us: he did not defend himself, but remained silent before the false accusations. Jesus did, however, assert himself, speaking the truth regardless of the cost.

The Fourth Station Peter Denies Jesus



Bible Reading

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the priest's maids came along. Seeing Peter warming himself, she looked intently at him and said, 'You too were with the Nazarene, Jesus.' But he denied it saying, 'I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.' So he went out into the outer court. (Then the cock crowed). The maid saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, 'This man is one of them.' Once again he denied it. A little later the bystanders said to Peter once more, 'Surely you are one of them; for you too are a Galilean.' He began to curse and swear, 'I do not know this man about whom you are talking.' And immediately a cock crowed a second time. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, 'Before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times.' He broke down and wept. *Mark 14:66-72*

Meditation

All of us are like Peter to an extent, willing but weak. We make resolutions, but don't keep them. We try to start a new life, but slip back again into a way of darkness. Yet weak as Peter was - not only at Jesus' trial but at other times as well - he truly loved Jesus. In fact, it was his love that repeatedly set him up for failure. All of Christ's other followers ran away after his arrest. Peter, however, followed along into the courtyard, only there to see his weakness take over. Almost immediately, he wept because of what he had done. A few short days afterward, Jesus would take his weak but loving followers give them divine strength to overcome human weakness.



The Fifth Station Pilate Condemns Jesus to the Cross

Bible Reading

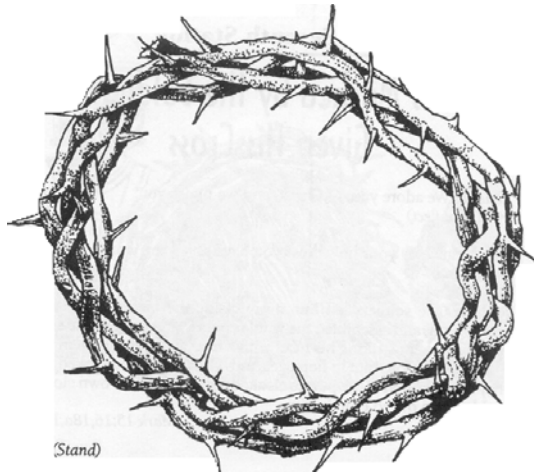
As soon as morning came, the chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate.... Now on the occasion of the feast he used to release to them one prisoner whom they requested. A man called Barabbas was then in prison along with the rebels who had committed murder in a rebellion. The crowd came forward and began to ask him to do for them as he was accustomed. Pilate answered, 'Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?' For he knew that it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate again said to them in reply, 'Then what do you want me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?' They shouted again, 'Crucify him.' Pilate said to them, 'Why? What evil has he done?' They only shouted the louder, 'Crucify him.' So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

Mark 15:1,6-15

Meditation

Pilate seemed anxious to release Jesus, almost looking for a way to do so. But the crowd would not allow that. Pilate capitulated, fearing for his future and lacking the courage to do what was right. We have, on occasion, acted similarly.

Fourth Hymn



The Sixth Station Jesus is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns

Bible Reading

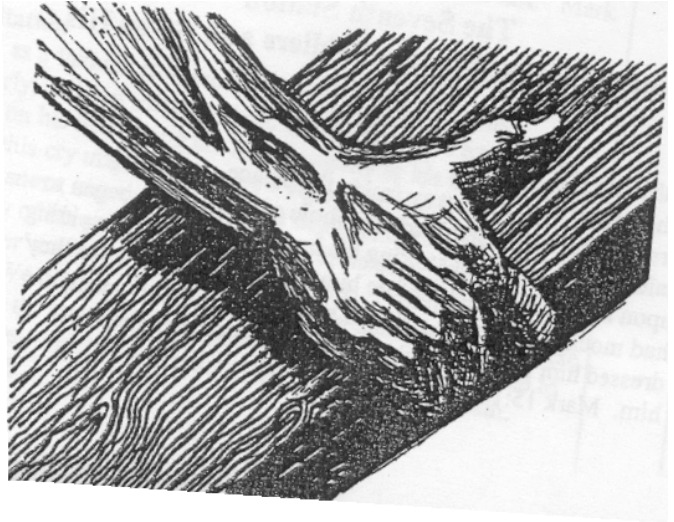
Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' And they struck him repeatedly. *John 19:1-3*

Meditation

Pilate had Jesus scourged - a truly cruel punishment. He was probably stripped to the waist and made to bend over a short pillar. Then he was lashed several dozen times with a whip, the first few of these strokes cutting open the skin of his back. After the scourging a wooden band, or crown, of long sharp thorns was pressed into his scalp. The pain had to be excruciating. When our own head hurts or we suffer some other bodily pain, it would do well for us to follow the advice in Paul's letter to the Hebrews: 'Let us.... keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.... For the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the cross...' *Hebrews 12:1-2*



The Seventh Station Jesus is Mocked by the Soldiers and Given His Cross



Bible Reading

The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is, the Praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort... They began to salute him... and kept striking his head with a reed and spitting upon him. They knelt before him in homage. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him out to crucify him. *Mark 15:16, 18a, 19-20*

Meditation

Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He deserves our praise and reverence. Yet the soldiers placed upon him a dirty cloak instead of a royal garment. They handed him a thin reed instead of the golden staff used by kings. Through all this humiliation, Jesus remained silent. How different with us. Though not as pure or as important as Christ, we nevertheless become angry and defensive when someone attacks or criticizes us in any way.

The Eighth Station Simon the Cyrenian Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

Bible Reading

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. *Mark 15:21*

Meditation

Those in charge of Jesus' crucifixion compelled Simon of Cyrene to help carry the Lord's cross. 4

He did not volunteer or willingly accept the task, but that is no surprise. Simon was only passing by and presumably knew little about Christ. We, on the other hand, do know Jesus. And we have heard his words about the necessity of taking up our own crosses each day and walking in his footsteps. What is our response? Must we be pressed to carry our crosses, be they big or small, or do we accept them willingly?

The Ninth Station Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

Bible Reading

A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children.' *Luke 23:27-28*



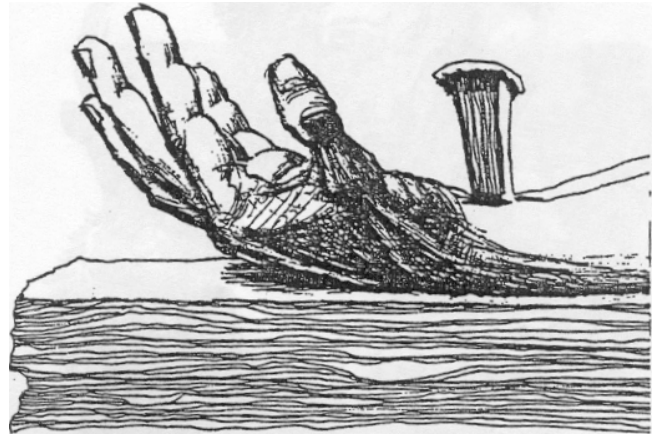
Meditation

Compassion means, literally to suffer with someone. Empathy means to feel with them. These women displayed both qualities as they accompanied Jesus, so bruised and disfigured, on this sorrowful journey through the streets of Jerusalem. We imitate their example when we listen with love to another's troubles, hold another's hand by a hospital bed, or embrace another who is grieving.

The Tenth Station Jesus Is Crucified

Bible Reading

They brought him to the place of Golgotha (which is translated Place of the Skull). They gave him wine drugged with Myrrh, but he did not take it. Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting lots for them to see what each should take. *Mark 15:22-24*



Meditation

First they drove nails through his hands and feet. Then they raised him on the cross, where he hung painfully for three hours - a demonstration of the depth of his love for us. For Christians this is the supreme symbol of our faith because it was here that Jesus died and brought God's forgiveness to us all.

Fifth Hymn

The Eleventh Station Jesus Promises Paradise to the Penitent Criminal

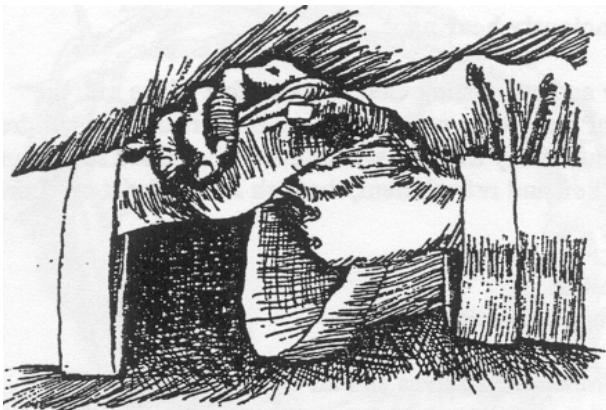


Bible Reading

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left.... Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us.' The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, 'Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He replied to him, 'Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.' *Luke 23:33,39-43*

Meditation

One criminal said 'no' to Christ, the other 'yes.' To his penitent companion on Calvary, Jesus promised immediate forgiveness and entrance into heaven. When we doubt God's willingness to forgive us, when we keep punishing ourselves for past mistakes, when we dread the thought of standing before the pure Christ with our not-so-pure lives, we might recall this scene on the cross and draw hope from it.



**The Twelfth Station
Jesus Speaks to His Mother
and to His Disciple**

Bible Reading

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold, your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.' *John 19:25-27*

Meditation

Even as Jesus was dying on the Roman cross suffering as the Lamb of God he took thought of and made provision for his mother. Often we are so concerned with our own problems that we fail to consider others. Jesus encourages us to share in his work of bringing grace and blessing to others. We remember others and bring them before God as we turn to our intercessions

Prayers

God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Therefore we pray to our heavenly Father for people everywhere according to their needs.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people; that in their vocation and ministry each may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your Name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Most gracious God and Father, in whose will is our peace: turn our hearts and the hearts of all to yourself, that by the power of your Spirit the peace which is founded on justice may be established throughout the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Merciful God, creator of all the people of the earth, have compassion on all who do not know you, and by the preaching of your Gospel with grace and power, gather them into the one fold of the one Shepherd, Christ our Lord.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Almighty and everlasting God, the comfort of the sad, the strength of those who suffer; hear the prayers of your children who cry out of any trouble: and to every distressed soul grant mercy, relief, and refreshment, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us commend ourselves and all God's children to his un failing love, and pray for the grace of a holy life, that, with all who have died in the peace of Christ, we may come to the fullness of eternal life and the joy of the resurrection.

Merciful Father **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**



The Thirteenth Station Jesus dies on the Cross

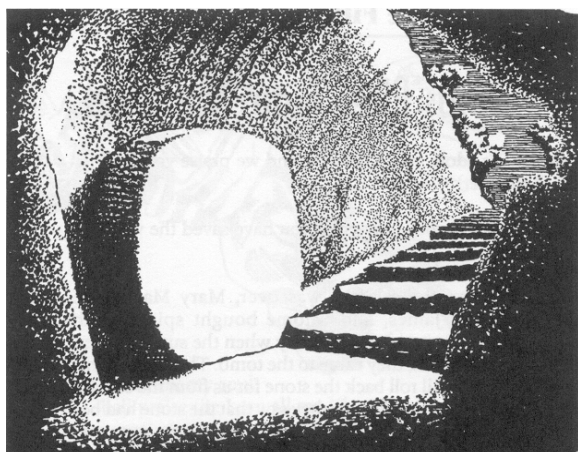
Bible Reading

At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachtani?' which is translated, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Some of the bystanders who heard it said, 'Look, he is calling Elijah.' One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down.' Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.
Mark 15:33-37



Meditation

Jesus, as a faithful Jew, would have prayed the Psalms regularly. It is no surprise, then, that these words from Psalm 22 are on his lips during the intense agony of his last moments. While this cry might seem to be a sign of despair or hopelessness, it reveals, rather, the depth of his anguish and the intensity of his pain. Shortly afterward, he surrenders totally to his Father's will - 'Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit.' We might wish to follow Christ's example, letting these words be the last on our lips as we wait each night for sleep to come, sleep which is a symbol of our own eventual death.



The Fourteenth Station The Burial of Jesus

Bible Reading

When it was already evening, since it was the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a distinguished member of the council, who was himself awaiting the kingdom of God... courageously went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was amazed that he was already dead. He summoned the centurion and asked him if Jesus had already died. And when he learned of it from the centurion he gave the body to Joseph. Having bought a linen cloth, he took him down, wrapped him in the linen cloth and laid him in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb.
Mark 15:42-46

Meditation

Starting on Good Friday, the Church enters into a brief period of grief, a time of mourning that looks with hope to the joy of the resurrection that will be proclaimed and celebrated on Easter Sunday. We grieve in much the same way when someone we love dies. There are tears and sorrow, of course, but rays of hope and belief in a later reunion brings us comfort, understanding and strength.

The Fifteenth Station Jesus Rises From the Dead

Bible Reading

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go and anoint him. Very early when the sun had risen, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb. They were saying to one another, 'Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back; it was very large. On entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed. He said to them, 'Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold, the place where they laid him.'
Mark 16:1-6

Meditation

After the cross comes the crown. After three days of mourning and waiting, the Church celebrates Jesus' Resurrection. He is the victorious. The Light of the World has conquered darkness. The Way, the Truth, and the Life has overcome death. We hear Jesus' words, 'Peace be with you.' We feel joy in our hearts. We sing again that acclamation of praise, 'Alleluia'. His triumph is ours as well.

On Easter Sunday, and in the many other Easters of our lives, we rise above our failures, our burdens, and our struggles. We, too, emerge victorious. Throughout our own Good Fridays, the risen Lord is by our side, pledging that we, too, will rise again, both here on earth and hereafter, in the life yet to come.

Sixth Hymn

Closing words

O Lord Jesus, as we face the cross today, we wonder at your love for us. We can never deserve what you did for us on this day. Looking at the people who brought about your death we can see so many of the same faults in ourselves and we are sorry for them. By faith we gladly take the forgiveness which you offer us from your cross and through the door which you pushed open then, we come back into God's family where we really belong.

Blessing

Christ crucified draw you to himself, to find in him a sure ground for faith, a firm support for hope, and the assurance of sins forgiven; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen

Some prayers for use at home

Servant Christ help us to follow you unto the cross.
To recognise the true way of life in your death
To see our hope in your self-spending love
To die to all within us not born of your love
Servant Christ, help us to follow you
(Litany of the disciples of Christ the Servant)

O God nails would not have held your Son to the cross had not love held him there
Make us truly thankful for his great love shown on the cross; and grant that it may fix us in those situations and places which we might most happily desert.
(Catherine of Sienna 1347-80)

O my God, Jesus I am in every way unworthy of you. Yet like Joseph of Arimathea, I want to offer a space for you. He offered his tomb; I offer my heart

Enter the darkness of my heart as your body entered the darkness of Joseph's tomb. And make me worthy to receive you, driving out all sin and darkness, that I might be filled with your light.
(St Bonaventure 1217-74)

Creator God, since with such a wonderful delicacy of touch you have translated yourself in human terms, give us also sensitivity to recognise that each person made in your image, being unique and different from us, has something to tell us about yourself that no one else can tell.
(Cardinal Basil Hume)



**Today he who hung the earth upon the waters
is hung upon the cross.
He who is King of the Angels
is arrayed in a crown of thorns.
He who wraps the heavens in clouds
is wrapped in the purple of mockery.
The bridegroom of the Church
is transfixed with nails.
The Son of the Virgin is pierced with a spear.
We venerate your Passion, O Christ,
Show us also your glorious Resurrection.**

Eastern Orthodox Church hymn for Good Friday