

Good Friday

A contemplative service
on the Stations of the
Cross

12pm – 1:30pm

St John's Church,
Ranmoor



In the first hour and a half of our time together on Good Friday we will have space for quiet reflection and contemplation as we journey with Jesus to Golgotha and the cross. Please use the information in this booklet as much or as little as you wish, it's not prescriptive it's there if you find it helpful. You are invited to sit with or walk between the stations of the cross placed around the church. On each half hour (12 o'clock, 12:30, 1:00) we will join together to sing a hymn, preceded by a prayer.

The stations of the Cross, Sieger Köder

Sieger Köder was born in Germany, 1925, where he studied until the outbreak of war. During the second world war, Köder was sent to France where he fought before being made a prisoner of war from 1944-1945. After the war Köder attended the Academy School of Art in Stuttgart and taught art for 12 years before studying for ordination to the priesthood. In 1971 Köder was ordained a Catholic priest and whilst ministering as a parish priest he continued painting prolifically, producing expressive, violently colourful and often waveringly abstract paintings of stories from the Bible, drawing the stories close to his own experiences of the horrors of war, and contemporary life.

The stations of the cross are a collection of Köder's paintings telling a narrative of the story of Christ's Passion, in a rich visual language with room for speculation, prayerful consideration, and to be overwhelmed by the horror and beauty of the passion, death, and resurrection.

God's folly is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

1 Corinthians 1. 25

Hymns

12:00pm There is a Green Hill

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.

Oh, dearly, dearly has He loved!
And we must love Him too
And trust in His redeeming blood
And try His works to do.

12:30pm Drop, Drop, Slow Tears

Drop, drop, slow tears,
and bathe those beautiful feet,
which brought from heaven
the news and Prince of Peace.

Cease not, wet eyes,
his mercies to entreat;
to cry for vengeance sin doth never
cease.

In your deep floods
drown all my faults and fears;
nor let his eye see sin, but through my
tears.

1:00pm When I survey the Wondrous Cross

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 death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them through 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 a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

Surrender *South Aisle, East end*

“They Jesus off to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest... Pilate took some water; washed his hands and said, I am innocent of this man’s blood.”

Matthew 26.57, 27.24

Where can we find real strength, where is the truth? In those with positions of power, or in the One whose head is bowed, whose arms are lowered in peace, only being raised when nailed to the cross?

How many innocent people pay the price of dishonesty, of abuse of power? Even by those who act in God's name. Indeed by anyone who manipulates the truth of the gospel to justify violence, non-involvement, refusal of truth. How ready we all are to surrender to hypocrisy and to hide behind the mask of our lack of courage. We would rather not get involved, distance ourselves from the wrong we see around us. Keep silent in the face of injustice inflicted on our brothers and sisters: friends, colleagues, neighbours and loved ones... All we want is to keep our name clean, our reputation untarnished.

†

Jesus, you didn't hesitate to pay the price of our wrongdoing. Give us the courage to face the truth when we fail. Give us the strength to be true to your Gospel and to be true too to our brothers and sisters.

Embrace *South Aisle*

“Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull, or as it is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.”

John 19.17

It takes courage to embrace that which we really would rather not. To reach out each day in our world of violence and atrocities. To make a decision to accept Jesus and the paradox of his cross.

Our hands are a precious gift. We can create or destroy, lift up or force down. We can embrace or push away. Jesus used his hands to bless, to gather the lost into his arms, all the time announcing the Good News, bringing peace. Until finally he opened his hands to the cross. Accepting and embracing it, he embraces our sorrows, our cross.

†

Lord Jesus, the mystery of your cross is at the heart of our lives. Help us to embrace the world as you did. Give us the perseverance we need to make our world a better place. Your kingdom come, your will be done.

Cornerstone *South Aisle*

“Crushed, because of our guilt. The punishment reconciling us fell on hum and we have been healed by his bruises.”

Isaiah 53.5-7

We all know the feeling: I can't go on. The very life is being squeezed out of us. Lack of love in our lives can weigh us down. When we are rejected we become vulnerable. We neither respect others nor ourselves. We become violent and abusive towards those who are more vulnerable than we are. Our human dignity is lost, and we condemn ourselves to shame and degradation.

Jesus died to save us from ourselves. He took away the sin of the world. He restored in us the likeness of the children of God.

†

Jesus, you bore our sin so that we might live. You are the rock of our strength. Do not allow us to neglect those who are crushed by their own mistakes, those who feel rejected, the sinful.

No Words *South Aisle, middle*

“His mother kept all these things in her heart.”

Luke 2.51

It is hard to stand by and see a child, a friend, a loved-one struggle with life.

Sometimes it is difficult even to say the right thing. Often we don't even know what to say. We would like to spare those we love the burden of carrying their own crosses.

Love is utterly vulnerable, completely defenceless, open to whatever comes. To love is to set people free to follow the demands of God, whatever the cost. All we can do is be there, just being... consoling... supporting... showing respect. These are sacred moments.

†

Lord Jesus, your mother shared in your pain, your destiny. As so often we hurt those we love, and fail those we hold dear, help us to share in the healing power of your love.

Unison *South Aisle, middle*

“They seized a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the countryside, to carry his cross.”

Mark 15.21

Our streets are crowded with people struggling under the weight they carry. Degradation, desperation, hunger, violence, abuse... Do we have the courage to stop, to get involved? Perhaps we would rather keep our distance. Strangers, refugees? Are they any concern of ours? Who is my neighbour?

What happens around us affects us all in one way or another. Called to be one, our command is to love one another. We owe each other love and support. Simon of Cyrene can inspire us: by accepting to help a stranger, he became one with Jesus, the Son of God.

†

Lord, as we journey help us to see those who stagger along the path of the cross: the refugees, the homeless, the lonely. We ask for strong shoulders on which to ease the load of others and a heart filled with love for all.

True Icon *South Aisle, west end*

“I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.”

Matthew 25.40

Where do we see the face of Christ today? Is it to be found in artistic reproductions? No. He told us where we can see his face. If only we have the courage to look at those who are hungry, those who are naked, those who are lonely, imprisoned; the least, the last... there we see Jesus himself. A gesture of love to release the pain of these brothers and sisters restores in us our likeness to Jesus.

We often hear of heroic acts which helped save the lives of many. How often though do we hear of the simple acts of love, the little ways in which love is shown? Being beside someone on his or her way to death and mopping their brow is a simple yet love-filled, intimate act, which can only bring us closer to Christ.

†

Lord, help us to recognise you in the hidden corners of this world. In the forgotten ones, those who mean so little to the world, whose presence is never greeted with a smile. We ask that we might reflect your love for all people in everything that we do.

With Us *West End, South side*

“Anyone who does not carry their cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”

Luke 14.27

Pressures from society, our peers, and possibly even our weak wills may stop us from being a true follower of Jesus. It can be difficult to lead the way; yet we know the exhilaration of winning a race, or struggling for what is right in life. We know what we should do and yet we carry on doing the things we shouldn't.

It may be difficult for us today to see any value in the cross. Suffering is a great mystery to us. We may have feelings of helplessness and find ourselves only able to ask Why? And yet the choice remains with us. Do we allow ourselves to be crushed beneath the weight of our daily cross, or do we pick ourselves up, and follow in the way of Jesus?

†

Lord, to pick up our cross and follow you is a difficult command to follow. It may be that in today's world our responsibilities are our crosses. Whatever the cross may we understand that only with you is the burden light.

Nurturing *West End, North side*

“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”

Luke 23.28

Mothers, women, know the pain of loving. In the face of human sorrow and tragedy, mothers pay the highest price of seeing their own children, flesh of their flesh, being deprived of their dignity, abused, tortured, killed. Mothers know the hard way of the cross.

The cross - this horrible means of torture of the past has been replaced with modern and more sophisticated means of mass destruction. Yet Jesus calls women to nurture a better world, so to spare humanity from even greater tragedy.

Indeed, he calls us all to have a mother-like heart, to nurture life around us.

†

Jesus, you are the beginning and the end, the One who leads us out of death into life. Help us to be people who nurture, giving life to those who fell abandoned or let down in any way.

Amen! *North Aisle, West end*

“His yoke is on my neck, he has deprived me of my strength.”

Lamentations 1.14

In everyone's life there are moments of inner loneliness, a rejection no words can describe. It is the isolation of the aged, the loss of a dear one, the collapse of a family's fortune, the horror of war, the loss of a job, the breaking of a relationship, dreams not coming true... Weighed down by the awfulness of it all, we feel like worms trampled underfoot!

Jesus experienced this emptiness as we do... human struggling. But he drank the chalice to the very dregs, still trusting in the Father's unfailing love. With him we will be able to rise up from the struggles that bind us and continue on our way to our final goal.

†

Lord Jesus, when all looks to be too much, when we feel overburdened by life, when nothing makes sense any longer allow the warmth of your love to touch. Give us the strength to say our amen to God and trust in the Father's care.

Whose? *North Aisle*

“They took Jesus’ clothing and divided it into four shares.”

John 19.23

Before his passion Jesus prayed that we may be one. Yet division and war among his followers have marked the history of Christianity. Blood has been shed in Jesus’ name too often, by too many claiming to possess the true faith, Jesus himself.

Our divisions are the crosses on which Jesus continues to die. Very often our diversity becomes division. Diversity is a gift of the Spirit and enriches the whole body, while division is the work of the evil one and impoverishes us all. "There is one body, one baptism, one faith. We belong to one another.

Every day we have the opportunity to work for unity and peace within ourselves, our family, our Churches. Or we may refuse to love our brothers and sisters, deepening the mark of the cross in our world.

†

Lord, our ways are not peaceful ways. Fill us with your Holy Spirit that we may become your people, the one body of Christ. Heal our divisions and give us the courage to work for unity and peace.

Face to Face *North Aisle, middle*

“All who see me jeer at me, they sneer and wag their heads.”

Psalm 22.7

There are moments in each one's life when we feel as though we are nailed, as if on a cross, unable to move, totally at the mercy of others. It may be because of sickness, disability, fear, violence, physical or physiological hurts.

When we feel helpless we come face to face with our own truth and the truth of those around us. We can become victims of others or we may make others pay the price of our indifference, of our insensitivity. As we look at the faces of those around Jesus, as he is being nailed on the cross, can we see ourselves?

†

Lord of love and compassion, help us to be true to ourselves and to others. Give us a heart to ease the burden of those who can't help themselves.

Holocaust *North Aisle, middle*

“My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?”

Matthew 27.46

As scripture says, 'You didn't accept sacrifices and holocausts... you gave me a body. Here is the body of Christ, the innocent victim who takes upon himself the human sorrow. Jesus dying on the cross. His whole being stretched to the limits of human bearing. His tortured body recalls the torments of millions of men, women and even little children, in Nazi concentration camps; past and present victims of racism, hatred and war.

Violence is becoming a commonplace experience in our homes. We run the risk of becoming used to the horrible scenes of violence shown by the media: brutalised bodies of children, old people and young, victims of terrorism and wars... We are becoming so accustomed to what we see, that we can watch undisturbed, making no distinction between fiction and reality. Even worse, we may be among those who inflict violence, to a greater or lesser degree, or we could be onlookers doing nothing to stop the violence.

†

Lord, dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life. Fill our hearts with your courage so that we no longer remain bystanders but can be counted among those who work for justice and peace.

Maternal Womb *North Aisle*

“Peace be with you, my own peace I give you; a peace which the world cannot give, this is my gift to you.”

John 14.27

Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. These words must have resounded in Mary's heart so many times as the mystery of Jesus unfolded day by day. How can we call blessed a mother whose child has been persecuted, maltreated and who ends up dead on a cross?

Mary is blessed because she believed in the faithfulness of God. Truly she personifies the maternal womb of God, that nurturing love, which gave Jesus' life over death and charges us with newness of life. The life of the children of God.

Can we trust God? Can we feel loved and blessed, held together in his continuous bond of love? Even when touched by suffering and death?

†

Lord of life, we pray with Mary, give us faith to love when our hearts feel cold. Give us hope and love when all seems lost, and trust when we feel bereft. In Jesus may we find the source of our new life and our peace.

Chrysalis *North Aisle*

“Unless the grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies it remains a single grain. If it dies it yields a rich harvest.”

John 12.24

So often we feel the failure of our hopes, our dreams, our plans. Our efforts may appear empty and our attempts fruitless. The stone is rolled across the entrance of our hearts, our relationships, our whole life -the stone shuts everything out.

Yet, unless the grain of wheat dies, it bears no fruit. Baptised in Christ, rooted in him, we are bearers of his new life. We carry God's reassurance that with him nothing is impossible.

†

Help us to believe, Lord, that endings are but beginnings and that graves are but doorways to a new life united with you. For you are the Lord of the living and the dead.

Amen.

***You are welcome to stay in the church as the choir sing Dvořák's
'Stabat Mater'***