

O Sacred Head, sore wounded (R&S 220) recorded by Thora

O sacred head, sore wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down;
O royal head, surrounded
with thorns thy only crown;
O Lord of life and glory;
what bliss till now was thine!
I read the wondrous story,
I joy to call thee mine.

For this they dying sorrow,
O Jesus, dearest friend,
what language shall I borrow
to thank thee without end?
O make me thine for ever,
and, should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
outlive my love to thee.

What though, my Lord, hast suffered,
was all for sinner's gain;
mine, mine was the transgression,
but thine the deadly pain.
By this, they bitter passion
Good Shepherd, think on me;
vouchsafe to me compassion,
unworthy though I be.

Be near when I am dying,
and show they cross to me
that I, for succour flying,
may rest my eyes on thee.
My Lord, thy grace receiving,
let faith my fears dispel,
that I may die believing,
and in thee, Lord, die well.

The Arrest and Crucifixion – John 18:1-19:30

Good Friday Meditation (2020) by Revd Nigel Uden

Our prayers take the form of a reflection based upon Isaac Watts' hymn, 'When I survey the wondrous cross ... my richest gain I count but loss', interspersed by verses from the hymn

When, *whenever* we observe and see, whenever we consider and contemplate the tree of Christ's 'love so amazing', we're beckoned into reflection about the world and ourselves. So we pray, inspired by six phrases from the hymn.

1:

'my richest gain'

As we are so readily made proud
by acquiring material things and academic awards,
by gaining status and achievement,
grant us wisdom to retain a right perspective,
which does not rubbish them,
but also finds the richer gain,
the pearl beyond price,
in the things of God's commonwealth.

2:

'all the vain things that charm me most'

As we are so easily allured
by mixed motives and flawed ambitions,
by foolish abuses and love of money,
charm us rather by the lasting worth
of truth and trustworthiness,
of mercy and generosity
in the power of your sanctifying Spirit.

3:

‘love and sorrow flow mingled down’
As with Christ, so with us,
may love and sorrow mingle
while we journey with the coronavirus.
And by that compassion let us pray
with those suffering from Covid-19
with those caring in hospitals and home,
with those striving to govern and to research,
with those providing the world’s necessities
with those anxious for loved ones or livelihood,
with those bereaved.

4:

‘all the globe’
Alerted that we are part of the global community
and that the current pandemic shows
neither person nor nation is entire unto itself,
let us strive for health and justice,
for compassion and peace across boundaries
confident that our hope lies in the victory of God’s grace
until all the globe thrives within God’s reign.

5:

‘the whole realm of nature’
Reminded of our place within the realm of nature,
let us acknowledge the wonder of springtime
and the reality of the climate emergency.
And as nature is not a present for us to give away,
less still a resource for us to fritter,
let us accept humanity’s vocation as stewards
‘to farm and defend’ it.

‘demands my soul, my life, my all’
Jesus Christ,
at the foot of the cross
I want to be with the centurion
and from the depth of my soul murmur
‘Truly this is the Son of God’;
I want to be with Frances Ridley Havergal
and yield my whole life, echoing her song,
‘I will be ever, only, all for you’;
and I want to answer your commandment
to love God with all that I am.
Yet even today, even at the foot of the cross,
I cannot – not on my own ...
only as you beckon me
only as you fill me.
Let it be so. Amen

A Good Friday Blessing

Bless you, Wise and Holy One,
for your enduring Word – the Word
that endures the cross of

words heard
but not understood
palms bestowed
for the wrong reason
laurels withheld
by home and family
friends with us only
until the cock crows
peers who condemn
our I-am-who-I-am –
denounce our integrity
as blasphemy

Bless you, Wise and Holy One,
for your enduring Word from the cross –

*whoever is true to I-am-who-I-am
who risks I-am for others
rises from affliction
rolls away despair
endures beyond
even death itself*

Norm S. D. Esdon in *A World of Blessing* ed. Geoff Duncan

We listen to *Misere Mei Deus* sung by Cambridge Voices while we contemplate the Crucifixion from La Sagrada Familia in Barcelona.

SILENCE as a candle is extinguished.