



The Triduum: GOOD FRIDAY

Each Holy Week we encounter two biblical accounts of the passion and death of Christ that offer quite different emphasis. On Palm/Passion Sunday, we hear a synoptic narrative that stresses the suffering of the man Jesus. On this day of the death of Christ we hear the passion according to St. John, in which Jesus, the

Word of God, walks forward to His arrest—no kiss of Judas here—and the soldiers fall down before the I AM. He answers boldly to the high priest, debates with Pilate, arranges for the care of His mother, gives over His spirit when all is finished, and is buried as a king would be, with one hundred pounds of spices. St. John's passion proclaims a triumphant Jesus, Who is God among us, reigning from the cross. And so we proclaim that, on this day, the very God died, and from divine death comes life for the world.

The ancient title for this day—the triumph of the cross—reminds us that the church gathers not to mourn but to celebrate Christ's life-giving passion and to find strength and hope in the tree of life. In the ancient bidding prayer we offer petitions for all the world for whom Christ died. Today's liturgy culminates in the Easter Celebration.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P. Almighty God, we ask You to look with mercy on Your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and to be given over to the hands of sinners and to suffer death on the cross; Who now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

C. Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

This text promises ultimate vindication for the servant, who made his life an offering for sin. The early church saw in the servant pouring himself out to death and being numbered with the transgressors important keys for understanding the death of Jesus.

See, My servant shall prosper;
he shall be exalted and lifted up,
and shall be very high.

¹⁴Just as there were many who were astonished at him
—so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance,
and his form beyond that of mortals—

¹⁵so he shall startle many nations;
kings shall shut their mouths because of him;
for that which had not been told them they shall see,
and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

^{53:1}Who has believed what we have heard?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

²For he grew up before Him like a young plant
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

³He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;
and as one from whom others hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him of no account.

⁴Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.

⁵But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.

⁶All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,

so he did not open his mouth.

⁸By a perversion of justice he was taken away.

Who could have imagined his future?

For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of My people.

⁹They made his grave with the wicked

and his tomb with the rich,

although he had done no violence,

and there was no deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain.

When You make his life an offering for sin,

he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;

through him the will of the LORD shall prosper.

¹¹Out of his anguish he shall see light;

he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.

The righteous one, My servant, shall make many righteous,

and he shall bear their iniquities.

¹²Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,

and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;

because he poured out himself to death,

and was numbered with the transgressors;

yet he bore the sin of many,

and made intercession for the transgressors.

SECOND READING: Hebrews 10:16-25

In the death of Jesus, forgiveness of sins is worked and access to God is established. Hence, when we gather together for worship and when we love others, we experience anew the benefits of Jesus' death.

[After the Holy Spirit says,]

¹⁶“This is the covenant that I will make with them

after those days, says the Lord:

I will put My laws in their hearts,

and I will write them on their minds,”

¹⁷he also adds,

“I will remember their sins

and their lawless deeds no more.”

¹⁸Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

¹⁹Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain (that is, through His flesh), ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who has promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us

consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

THE PASSION ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

Readers: Sara Wollum, Pastor Munter

A period of silence follows the gospel.

HYMN *Sing, My Tongue*

Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle; Sing the ending of the fray.
Now above the cross, the trophy, sound the loud triumphant lay;
Tell how Christ, the world's Redeemer, as a victim won the day.
Tell how, when at length the fullness of the appointed time was come,
He, the Word, was born of woman, left for us His Father's home,
blazed the path of true obedience, shone as light amidst the gloom.
Thus, with thirty years accomplished, He went forth from Nazareth,
destined dedicated, willing, did His work, and met His death;
like a lamb He humbly yielded on the cross His dying breath.
Faithful cross, true sign of triumph, be for all the noblest tree;
none in foliage, none in blossom, none in fruit your equal be;
symbol of the world's redemption, for your burden makes us free.
Unto God be praise and glory; to the Father and the Son,
to the eternal Spirit honor now and evermore be done;
praise and glory in the highest, while the timeless ages run.

Since the third century, Christians have gathered on Good Friday at the foot of the cross and there prayed the great intercessions. The cross is in the center of all things, and as we stand with Mary and John at the cross, the bidding prayer opens us up to ever-widening circles of concern. In these prayers we ask God to look with mercy on every person and thing in the cosmos.

BIDDING PRAYER

We will bid several prayers. The congregation responds after the Pastor says:

P. ... We ask this through Christ our Lord.

C. Amen.

For the holy Church of God
For those preparing for Baptism
For the Jewish people
For those who do not believe in God
For those who serve in public office

For the leaders of the Church
For the unity of all Christians
For those who do not believe in Christ
For the creation
For those who suffer

- P. Finally, let us pray for all those things for which our Lord would have us ask.
C. **Our Father . . . forever and ever. Amen**

ADORATION OF THE CROSS

- P. Behold, the life-giving cross on which was hung the Salvation of the whole world.
C. **Oh, come, let us worship Him.**

A period of silence follows.

- P. We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
C. **By Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.**
P. May God be merciful to us and bless us, show us the light of His countenance, and come to us.
C. **Let Your ways be known upon the earth, Your saving health among all nations.**
P. Let all the people praise You, O God; let all the people praise You.
C. **We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You. By Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.**

Period of Silence

HYMN *O Christ, Thou Lamb of God*

O Christ Thou Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Have mercy upon us!

O Christ Thou Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Have mercy upon us!

O Christ Thou Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world,
Grant us Thy peace! Amen.

CLOSING RITE

- P. We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
C. **By Your holy cross, You have redeemed the world.**
P. If we have died with Him, we shall also live with Him.
C. **If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.**

Period of silence.

- P. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, we pray to set Your passion, cross and death between Your judgment and our souls, now and in the hour of our death. Give mercy and grace to the living; pardon and rest to the dead; to Your Holy Church peace and concord; and to us sinners everlasting life and glory; for with the Father and the Holy Spirit, You live and reign, one God, now and forever.
C. **Amen**

This hymn on Christ's Passion was written for Good Friday by a 17th-century Hungarian pastor. The text moves from Genesis to Revelation, focusing on the Tree of Life. The first four verses look at the Tree in more and more detail, culminating in the proclamation that our own resurrection is rooted in Christ' with all of heaven singing in thanks and praise as all are invited to "take, take it freely."

HYMN

There in God's Garden

1 There in God's gar - den stands the Tree of Wis - dom,
 whose leaves hold forth the heal - ing of the na - tions:
 Tree of all knowl - edge, Tree of all com -
 pas - sion, Tree of all beau - ty.

2. Its name is Jesus, name that says, "Our Savior!" There on its branches see the scars of suffering; see where the tendrils of our human selfhood feed on its lifeblood.
3. Thorns not its own are tangled in its foliage; our greed has starved it, our despite has choked it. Yet, look! It lives! Its grief has not destroyed it nor fire consumed it.
4. See how its branches reach to us in welcome; hear what the Voice says, "Come to Me, ye weary! Give Me your sickness, give Me all your sorrow, I will give blessing."
5. This is my ending, this my resurrection; into Your hands, Lord, I commit my spirit. This have I searched for; now I can possess it. This ground is holy.
6. All heav'n is singing, "Thanks to Christ Whose passion offers in mercy healing, strength, and pardon. Peoples and nations, take it, take it freely!" Amen! Our Savior!

There is no benediction. The service concludes Sunday with the Festival of Easter live streamed on Bethel's Facebook page at 10 a.m.

Acknowledgements

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Cross of Glory

“It is finished.” The final word Jesus says from the cross in the Gospel of John is not just a recognition that the end has come; it is a declaration of accomplishment. The light has shone in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. In the Gospel of John, Jesus’ passion is recounted as a story of victory. Jesus is captured, betrayed and denied by His closest friends, scourged, mocked, and executed. Yet in John’s Gospel, Jesus always seems to be in control, confident of His mission and purpose. The accent is less on His suffering humanity and more on His triumphant divinity.

Throughout this Gospel Jesus has made “I am” statements: I am the true vine, I am the bread of life, I am the good shepherd. This “I am” recalls the holy name of God revealed to Moses (Exod. 3:14). When the soldiers come to capture Jesus, He asks whom they seek. “Jesus of Nazareth,” they reply. In Greek, Jesus responds simply, “I am”—the name of God—and that is why the soldiers step back and fall to the ground.

It’s hard for us to remember the reality of Jesus’ suffering when we want to celebrate, and hard for us to see God’s victory as won through suffering. Often our Palm Sundays have been parades, and our Good Fridays have been funerals. The wisdom of the ancient church, though, is to read on Palm Sunday the Passion according to Matthew, Mark, or Luke, one of the gospels where Jesus’ suffering humanity is emphasized. On Good Friday, when we might get caught up in the sadness and horror of Jesus’ death, the church sends us to the Passion according to John, where the cross is glory. In the darkness of cruelty, pain, and death, the light of God shines unconquered.

About the Icon of the Crucifixion (on the cover)

For the Jews request a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified — to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks — Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God” – Apostle Paul (1st Letter to the Corinthians)

Jesus Christ is nailed to the Cross at the hands and feet on a hill, outside of the city walls, which can be seen in the background. At the foot of the Cross stands Jesus’ mother, grieving with the other women – among them Mary Madeline and Mary Cleopas; to Jesus’ left stands the young Apostle John and one of the Roman centurions. Jesus Himself bears

the spear-wound on His right side, gushing blood and water. His head is bowed, His eyes are closed; He has breathed His last (Mk 15:37; Jn 19:30).

The sorrow of this scene is etched into the faces of those at the foot of the Cross. This event is also played out in the Heavenly realm: two angels in the top corners rush in to take Jesus' spirit, covering their faces, unable to witness the scene. The physical drama of the scene is also written into the Icon: the ground beneath the Cross is cracked in two, revealing a skull. Christ's place of execution was called *Golgotha*, the place of the skull, and tradition related that this was the site of the first man Adam's tomb.

At the top the sun is shown black, and the moon is shown blood-red. The solar eclipse at Christ's crucifixion is described in the Gospels, and the red moon recalls a prophecy of Joel, which St. Peter quoted on the day of Pentecost. *The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. (Joel 2:31).*

The multitudes of mockers and doubters who thronged Golgotha are not shown – only the faithful disciples of Christ. The Roman centurion, rather than being Christ's executioner, is depicted in the process of proclaiming with wonder: "Truly, this man is the son of God". By tradition he is recognized as the saint: Longinus. Only those, saints and angels, "illuminated by the Truth" witness the Cross now, and we are invited to observe it along with them. What do we see?

The most striking detail is that Jesus, clearly shown as dead, still has His halo. Despite undergoing bodily death Jesus Christ's Divinity has not left Him. Even bleeding and physically dead upon the Cross, Christ is still fully divine. He wears a crown of Glory, not a crown of thorns. From Christ's side, the blood and water is collected by an angel with a chalice, and brings to remembrance Christ's words regarding His Passion: "*Drink from it all of you. For this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*". The blood from Christ's side which convinced the faithless at Golgotha that He was dead is in fact the very thing which brings *life* to those dead in sin.

We cannot look upon the Crucifixion of Our Lord without some sense of shame at what He suffered. Yet we are told by Jesus Himself that His Passion upon the Cross was necessary for our Salvation. The Icon of the Crucifixion portrays the horror and victory, the earthly and heavenly, together in one image, so that – impossible as it may seem – we can behold this paradox.

<https://iconreader.wordpress.com/2011/03/04/the-crucifixion-iconmeaning-of-the-cross/>