St Andrew’s, Chesterton
A meditation on the Passion
28 March 2021
Palm Sunday

Voluntary
*Liebster Jesu wir Sind hier*, BWV 731 (J.S. Bach)

Hymn
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 cross of Christ, my God!
   All the vain things that charm me most,
   I sacrifice them through 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. His dying crimson, like a robe,
   spreads o’er his body on the tree;
   then am I dead to all the globe,
   and all the globe is dead to me.
5. 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.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Bidding Prayer
*The minister introduces the service with a bidding prayer, concluding with the Lord’s Prayer*

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.
Palm Sunday

Bible Reading

Mark 11.8-10

Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!’

Poems

Palm Sunday

Now to the gate of my Jerusalem,
The seething holy city of my heart,
The Saviour comes. But will I welcome him?
Oh crowds of easy feeling make a start:
They raise their hands, get caught up in the singing,
And think the battle won. Too soon they’ll find
The challenge, the reversal he is bringing
Changes their tune. I know what lies behind
The surface flourish that so quickly fades;
Self-interest, and fearful guardedness,
The hardness of the heart, its barricades,
And at the core, the dreadful emptiness
Of a perverted temple. Jesus, come
Break my resistance and make me your home.

Malcolm Guite (1957-)

The Donkey

When fishes flew, and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moments when the moon was blood
Then surely was I born.

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The Devil’s walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms about my feet.

G K Chesterton (1874-1936)

Anthem

Hosanna to the Son of David
sung by St Martin’s Voices

Hosanna to the Son of David.
Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord. Thou that sittest in the highest heavens. Hosanna in excelsis Deo.

from Matthew 21.9 and Luke 19.38
Music: Thomas Weelkes (1576-1623)

Prayer

Glory be to Jesus,
who, in bitter pains,
poured for me the life-blood from his sacred veins.

Grace and life eternal
in that blood I find;
blest be his compassion infinitely kind.

Blest through endless ages
be the precious stream,
which from endless torments did the world redeem.

Abel’s blood for vengeance
pleaded to the skies;
but the blood of Jesus
for our pardon cries.

Oft as it is sprinkled
on our guilty hearts,
Satan in confusion
terror-struck departs;

Oft as earth exulting
wafts its praise on high,
angel-hosts rejoicing
make their glad reply.

Lift ye then your voices;
swell the mighty flood;
louder still and louder praise the precious blood.

Anonymous Italian, translated Edward Caswall (1814-1878))

Blessing

Your tricks begin to turn upon you.
My grace, everywhere, spreads wider,
Wider. The bitter drink you have brewed,
Taste it yourself. Doctor of Death, drink
The prescription you have made. I am
Lord of life and so love is my drink.

William Langland (c.1332-86), translated by Ronald Tamplin (1935-)

Anthem

Crucifixus a 8
sung by St Martin’s Voices

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis
sub Pontio Pilato.
Passus et sepultus est.

He was indeed crucified for us
at the hands of Pontius Pilate.
He died and was buried.

from the Credo of the Ordinary of the Mass
Music: Antonio Lotti (1667-1740)

Prayer

Hymn

Glory to Jesus,
who, in bitter pains,
poured for me the life-blood from his sacred veins.
The Harrowing of Hell

‘Hold still,’
Truth said: ‘I hear some spirit
Speaking to the guards of hell,
And see him too, telling them
Unbar the gates. “Lift your heads
You gates,”’
And from the heart
of light
A loud voice spoke.
‘Open
These gates, Lucifer,
Prince of this land: the king of glory
A crown upon his head
Comes.’

Satan groaned and said to his hell’s angels,
‘It’s that sort of light sprung Lazarus.
Unstoppable. This’ll be big, big
Trouble, I mean all sorts of bother
For the lot of us…

Again
The light said, ‘Unlock.’
Said Lucifer, ‘Who
Goes there?’

A huge voice replied, ‘The lord
Of power, of strength, that made
All things. Dukes of this dark place
Undo these gates so Christ come
In, the son of heaven’s King.’
With that word, hell split apart,
Burst its devil’s bars; no man
Nor guard could stop the gates swing
Wide. The old religious men,
Prophets, people who had
walked in darkness, ‘Behold the Lamb
Of God,’ with Saint John sang now.
But Lucifer could not look
At it, the light blinding him.
And along that light all those
Our Lord loved came streaming out.
‘Body and soul,’ Christ said,
‘I am here. Look on me.
I come for all sinners,
To give both the devil
His due and claiming mine….

‘So, Lucifer, don’t let yourself think
I’m bringing any of these sinners
Out illegally, by power alone.
I ransom my people in justice
And in law. I come not to destroy
The law but to fulfil it. And so
What a trick
Took
Grace
Has regained.
As Adam
And all his people
Died
Through a tree
So
Through a tree
Adam
And all his people
Shall
Rise again.

Maundy Thursday

Bible Reading

Mark 14.32-36

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to
his disciples, ‘Sit here while I pray.’ He took with him
Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed
and agitated. And said to them, ‘I am deeply grieved,
even to death; remain here, and keep awake.’ And going
a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and
prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from
him. He said, ‘Abba, Father, for you all things are possi-
bile; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but
what you want.’

Poems

Lenten Flowers

Primrose, anemone, bluebell, moss
Grow in the Kingdom of the Cross
And the ash-tree’s purple bud
Dresses the spear that sheds his blood.

With the thorns that pierce his brow
Soft encircling petals grow
For in each flower the secret lies
Of the tree that crucifies.

Garden by the water clear
All must die who enter here!

Kathleen Raine (1908-2003)

Gethesemane

The grass never sleeps.
Or the roses.
Nor does the lily have a secret eye that shuts until morn-
ing.

Jesus said, wait with me. But the disciples slept.
The cricket has such splendid fringe on its feet,
and it sings, have you noticed, with its whole body,
and heaven knows if it ever sleeps.

Jesus said, wait with me. And maybe the stars did, maybe
the wind wound itself into a silver tree, and didn’t move,
maybe the lake far away, where once he walked as on a
blue pavement,
lay still and waited, wild awake.

Oh the dear bodies, slumped and eye-shut, that could not
keep that vigil, how they must have wept,
so utterly human, knowing this too
must be a part of the story.

Mary Oliver (1935-2019)

Anthem

Christus factus est
sung by St Martin’s Voices

Christus factus est pro nobis obediens
usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.
Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum et dedit illi nomen, quod est super omne nomen.
Christ became obedient for us unto death, 
even to the death, death on the cross.
Therefore God exalted Him and gave Him a name 
which is above all names.

Text: Philippians 2:8-9
Music: Felice Anerio (1560-1614)

Prayer

Good Friday

Bible Reading

Mark 15.25-32

It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, ‘The King of the Jews.’ And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, ‘Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!’ In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, ‘He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.’ Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

Poems

To keep the cold wind away

This wind by reason is called temptation
   It rages both night and day.
Remember, man, how the Saviour was slain
   To keep the cold wind away.

Pride, and presumption, and false extortion,
   That many man doth betray -
Man, come to contrition and ask confession
   To keep the cold wind away.

O Mary mild, for love of the child
   That died on Good Friday,
Be our salvation from mortal damnation
   To keep the cold wind away.

He was nailed, his blood was haled,
   Our remission for to buy;
And for our sins all he drank both eisel and gall
   To keep the cold wind away.

Sloth, envy, covetousness and lechery
   Blow the cold wind, as I dare say;
Against such poison he suffered his passion
   To keep the cold wind away.

Casting all your Care upon God,
for he careth for you

Come, heavy souls, oppressed that are
With doubts, and fears, and caring care.
Lay all your burdens down, and see
There’s one that carried once a tree
Upon his back, and which is more,
A heavier weight, your sins, he bore.

Think then how easily he can
Your sorrows bear that’s God and man;
Think too how willing he’s to take
Your care on him, who for your sake
Sweat bloody drops, prayed, fasted, cried,
Was bound, scourged, mocked, and crucified.
He that so much for you did do,
Will do yet more, and care for you.

Anthem

O Saviour of the world
sung by St Martin’s Voices

O Saviour of the world,
who by thy cross and precious blood hast redeemed us.
Save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord.
Amen.

Collect for the visitation of the sick
Music: John Goss (1800-80)

Holy Saturday

Bible Reading

1 Peter 3.18-22

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

Poems

Good Friday: the Third Nocturne

Alone to sacrifice thou goest, Lord,
Giving thyself to death whom thou has slain.
For us thy wretched folk is any word,
Who know that for our sins this is thy pain?

For they are ours, O Lord, our sins, our deeds,
Why must thou suffer torture for our sin?
Let our hearts suffer for thy passion, Lord,
That sheer compassion may thy mercy win.

This is that night of tears, the three days’ space,
Sorrow abiding of the eventide,
Until the day break with the risen Christ,
And hearts that sorrowed shall be satisfied.

So may our hearts have pity on thee, Lord,
That they may sharers of thy glory be:
Heavy with weeping may the three days pass,
To win the laughter of thine Easter Day.

Peter Abelard (1079-1142)