

Good Friday Service 2025

St. Michael & All Angels Church, Sandhurst

Reflections by Emma Hodge

Welcome

Hymn 499 - There is a Green Hill

Collect

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 52:12-53:12

Silence

Anthem From Heaven You Came - Choir

1. The Garden of Gethsemane John 18:1-11

Reflection

Imagine you are one of the people in the garden near Jesus and the disciples. You've heard talk about Jesus, you saw him come into Jerusalem only a few days ago riding on a donkey and you joined in with the crowd shouting Hosanna.

Through the olive trees in the garden you see a large group coming towards Jesus and the disciples they are made up of Roman Soldiers, you recognise others as officers of the chief priests and Pharisees. There is one person who seems to be guiding them to Jesus and the disciples.

They stop and speak to Jesus.

Then

Something surprising happens,

They drew back and fell to the ground

Hold on.

What's going on that's not what is expected.

You wonder what is going on.

You had heard talk that the Pharisees and chief priests weren't happy with Jesus and if they were coming with soldiers, were they going to take him away, surely they would have just taken him away? So why did they fall back and kneel? Why not just take him away or leave on their own?

Were they in the presence of God which made them fall to the ground? The Disciples hadn't sensed it, they were still standing. What was it about Jesus that made the group fall to the ground?

The group then gets up and leads Jesus away and you wonder what will happen next?

What questions do you have about your faith, your knowledge of Jesus?

Silence

Hymn

346 - My Song is Love Unknown

2. Jesus before the Council: Peter's Denial John 18:12-27

Reflection

Imagine you are Peter,

you are in the courtyard and gathered with other people around a fire to keep warm this night, people are chatting but you are not really listening instead you are reflecting on the events of the last few days, the other night in the garden, with a couple of others where Jesus went up to pray and you and they fell asleep even though Jesus had asked you to keep watch.

What are you feeling?

Then last night at supper, he said that you would deny knowing him before the cock crows– that's not right and you denied it,

you know he is special,

you know that he is the son of the living God

so how can you deny knowing the son of the living God?

You wonder what will happen next,

Jesus in the court with Pilate and Jewish priests, You knew there was talk in the town and you know how hot some tempers are and worry that it could become violent, you are not as young as some others and perhaps you are scared

that if things become violent you couldn't get away from any trouble

Then someone comes up and asks if you know Jesus,

How do you respond

Fearfully you deny him

You wonder what is going on inside with Jesus, you wonder if you and the rest of the disciples could also be taken away by force, what about your families, those who depend on you

Then someone comes up and asks if you know Jesus,

You deny it again

They leave you alone and you go back to your thoughts, your worries

Another person comes up, asks if you know Jesus

You deny it for a third time and then the cock crows.

How do you feel, do you feel overwhelmed by guilt the fact that you broke your word that you wouldn't deny him, just as you broke your word the other night that you would stay awake and watch while Jesus was praying

The feeling of despondency

Of guilt

So often, the same is true of us, we know who Jesus is but our words and actions deny him.

Silence

3. Jesus before Pilate John 18:28-19:16a

Reflection

Imagine you are Pilate

Your job is to rule, to keep the peace and now early in the morning, you are asked to go outside and greet senior Jewish Officials. Just before a major Jewish festival, you don't celebrate but there are a lot of more people in the city and your soldiers will be working hard to keep order and watch out for potential troublemakers and now they come and say they have interrogated a criminal and

They ask you to put someone to death – the charge

King of the Jews.

Hmm OK so not a simple criminal, not some minor infringement of Jewish rules, instead a charge which is full of political tensions. The potential to become a situation where you will

You speak to the accused.

He doesn't give you any straight answers

He says things like “my kingdom is not of this world” - that doesn't make sense, you feel even more confused and conflicted. He doesn't sound like any king. He may sound crazy but that's not a crime

How do you attempt to resolve this? How do you show that you are a good leader?

You tell the crowd that you find now basis for the charge and offer to let him go but they ask for Barrabas – a man who was responsible for stirring up trouble and plotting an insurrection and with more people in Jerusalem this could be dangerous. They want you to release someone you know is a trouble maker and kill an innocent man?

The crowd are insistent about Barrabas

You continue to question Jesus

He then starts speaking about truth.

It doesn't make much sense;

Truth – does this mean that he is not lying?

Truth, is there something more? You struggle to understand and then

He says

Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice

You ask Jesus this question..... What is truth.....

Pilate, someone who is torn,

Jesus reassures him that his power comes from God but still

Pilate questions him

Often at times we can be torn

Not knowing what to do

To search for truth like Pilate

Hymn 399 - On a hill far away (The Old Rugged Cross)

4. Crucifixion

John 19:16b 27

Reflection

Imagine that you are one of the women standing at the foot of the Cross, you are friends with the other women and Mary.

Your thoughts are with Mary at the moment, you hope that the sign that is over Jesus head proclaiming he is king of the Jews doesn't create an angry mob. Mary always said that Jesus was special and as you came to know him yourself you saw something, you couldn't say what but you certainly wanted to hear more,

You had heard some of his teachings and there was a wisdom, making you understand a bit more about God.

You were with him only a few days ago when everything seemed to be going so well, everyone was jubilant and the mood was definitely positive and there was an air of change, of anticipation

Then in the week, Nard was poured on his feet and that wonderful calming sweet fragrance filled the house at dinner

and when Judas moaned about the cost he said something about his death... Did he know then he was about to die?

and then last night at supper he said those words “this is my body; this is my blood”

and now he is hanging on the cross and will die shortly, you wonder what will happen next, where do the group of people go now, do we all go our separate ways or....

You watch the soldiers dividing Jesus clothing between them and casting lots for the seamless tunic and you wonder if they realise that Jesus mother is standing only a few feet away.

You pray that Mary will find strength to carry on and you had hoped that one of her other children would be with her. And then Jesus seemed to sense what you were thinking and he tells John to look after his mother and take her into his family, you know John and you know he will do just that and you feel relieved that in the difficult days and weeks that must surely will come, Mary will have someone to lean on who had spent a lot of time with Jesus.

You reflect on what he said and often he seemed to see the future and wondered if this was one of the things he saw.

The women at the cross prioritised spending time with Jesus and with his disciples. May we also share that priority, spending time with Jesus and other Christians.

Silence

Psalm 22:1-21

5. The Death of Jesus John 19:28-37

Reflection

Imagine you are one of the soldiers,

you've been tasked with guarding those put to death by crucifixion. There are often people watching and throwing insults at those being crucified but there was something different about this group being crucified..... You are not sure what. There was something different about the man in the middle. What was it?

You heard the one in the middle speak earlier in the day, almost giving instructions to someone to care for a woman

You now hear him cry out saying that he is thirsty and saw that someone offered him a drink of sour wine via a sponge on a stick of hyssop. That in itself is pretty unusual and you wonder what is special about him.

The people who had come to watch him die were silent but still there.

You then hear him say "it is Finished". What has finished you wonder? Who was he speaking to? Someone at the cross or someone else?

Later, you receive orders to ensure that they die quickly; while not usual it was something you had done before so

