



March Team Ministry

March Team St John, St Mary, St Peter, St Wendreda

Welcome

First Sunday of Lent ~ 21st February 2021

Please keep in touch with one another, and I am always glad to hear from you on 01354 279232 or at andrew.marchurch@gmail.com

The rules for Church services have not changed under this lockdown, but with the rise in infections everyone is asked to be especially vigilant. For some people a greater degree of isolating is sensible. No one should feel pressurised in attending church

We have Church services with social distancing, and also, for the foreseeable future, our zooming, emailing and leaflet deliveries. We want people to have a genuine choice. We are also trying to allow other aspects of the church's life to happen. Ideas and suggestions welcome.

St Peter's Sundays 8am & 11am; Wednesdays 10am

St Mary's Sundays 9.15am

St John's Sundays 9.30am; Tuesdays 10am

"Stay in touch, take care, keep safe, continue praying and God bless."

Stations of the Cross

Every Lent for the last 25 or more years I have led weekly services of Stations of the Cross. Sadly not possible this year, so I offer these reflections to walk and meditate on the stations through Lent.

Introduction

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We sign ourselves with the cross of Christ.

Father, in Baptism we were signed with the Cross of Christ.

There is an urgency in our Christian lives that allows no pause for we are indeed a pilgrim people

We cannot stand still, we cannot remain the same.

As now we meditate again on the Way of the Cross we continue on our journey seeking yourself.

Be with us Lord, as we accept the Cross that each of us must carry.

Humanity is clay moulded through suffering. Suffering runs deep in us, from the first cry which ushers us into life, to the last laboured breath that hands us over to eternity. Suffering is a mystery to us. It is the mystery of Christ's cross. And that cross offers us two alternatives: either we can fall crushed beneath the cross or, suffering, be lifted up, triumphant through crucified, hanging in the immensity of God's love.

'Behold the man', says Pilate as Jesus stands before the crowd. This indeed is the Man, man fully human, man as he ought to be. With Christ, the real man, we can dare to move to our own calvary.

Heavenly Father, your Son has trodden the path before us. May we draw strength to go forward, knowing that today we will have to face nothing that will be like His suffering. Whatever we may have to face, his love and compassion will keep us firmly on the path you walk with us. For this we thank you through that same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Jesus is condemned to death

The Prisoner, looking beyond his captors, said little in his own defence, responding only in honesty and truth. Because of this, they had already agreed his guilt.

Like a guilty criminal before the court Jesus is condemned to die. He is accused of having spoken improperly about God. He who is the Word of God, He who is not guilty of anything; but is accused of inventing new ways of loving God and his fellow men and women.

What exactly has he done? You already know! He has said that he came to save people on earth from evil and despair. What exactly has he done? You already know! To all people, without exception, he has shown the immense love of God! ***It is you, O Lord who always stand by the side of the innocent!***

How many raised hands have threatened people everywhere! Violent hands have splattered the pages of history with blood. Blood has been shed by Christians, even in the name of Christ himself. So many accusing fingers... denouncing, destroying brothers and sisters, our fellow humans. How ready we are to blame others for our own calamities, our failures, our sin... How easily we point the finger at colleagues, parents, children, partners those who cannot defend themselves!

Like the crowd I am always ready to release Barabbas... The Barabbas hidden in me, my secret violent man. And yet, as we make others suffer, we diminish ourselves. Our threatening hands bind us with new chains.

Father, send your Just One to forgive the Barabbas that is in me. Grant me mercy, so that I may stop pointing my accusing finger. Let me learn to love as you are loving me. Teach me how to free others so that I too may be free. Lord, we hear your voice declaring (for all who will listen) the mystery of Incarnation. We seek your silent face and acknowledge our need for forgiveness.

II Jesus is given his cross to carry.

Condemned, he was taken by force of arms at dawn. Having beaten him they led him away for execution to a place beyond the city limits.

The cross is heavy; there is nothing heavier than a cross: it is nothing but sorrow, it is nothing but tears, it is nothing but suffering. Jesus stumbles. The cross crushes him. It is heavy on his shoulders, but even heavier in his heart. It keeps him bowed, bent, weighed down. It is a burden.

It is you, O Lord, who shares the weight of our sorrows.

Man humiliates man. What is that heap of bones, that pathetic pile of rags at the side of our roads? It is a man, as I am a man. Hungry belly, face stained with mud. Many like him cry out.... But every humiliation inflicted on any person disfigures us all, because it disfigures the humanity we share. The individual is increasingly lonely, more and more a mystery to himself, to herself; because 'anyone who does wrong will be repaid in turn.' Our wrongs mount up the burden becomes unsupportable. To take up the cross, day by day, man needs God's hand, Christ's own strong hand to help him.

It is difficult, Lord, to look outside myself, difficult to look within and face the wounds of this man suffering. Teach me then, Good Lord, to carry the cross of my being human, so that I may truly know that with you the burden is light. And only with you is the burden light.

Lord, you accepted your cross and began your final journey; - it had to be done. May I accept my Cross, understanding that my journey cannot be made without you.
