



# **March Team Ministry**

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

*Welcome*

## **Fourth Sunday of Lent ~ 14th March 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](mailto:andrew.marchurch@gmail.com)

**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.***

#### **X. Jesus is stripped**

**Stripped, he is prepared for public shame.**

**Bruised, he is silent.**

**With shoulders bared he accepts the inevitable.**

**Besides the crowd are waiting.**

He has arrived at the top of the hill. Calvary. The execution place. They form a circle round him like a pack. As if to track him down and stop him getting away! He is very weak. He is defenceless. He is exhausted. It always comes to this when you are rejected and suffer because of others. They have already taken away his strength and his dignity. Now they are taking away his clothes as well. He is stripped, completely, like a poor person who has nothing more. They can take away his clothes, but his love, no-one can take from him!

***It is you, O Lord, who give people everything!***

Man, naked, vulnerable, is afraid. It is not only shame or modesty which causes us deep emotion about our nakedness. Once we, humanity, were clothed in innocence. And since its loss we have longed to cover ourselves again. To re-cover that beauty that was ours, humanities. Mistakenly, we turn towards things, material things – anything to make us feel secure. But the essence of life is not what we have, but how we stand before God. By measuring things in terms of money and power we cover up our true self. And in order to be clothed like that we may be stripping others; 'For the love of money is the source of all evil.'

*Lord Christ, on Calvary, you made yourself naked so that we might be enfolded in love. Give us your wedding garment, Risen Lord, make us ready to sit at table with you in your eternal kingdom.*

***Lord, strip me of all I carry:  
strip me of everything that prevents me from carrying my cross.  
And when I am stripped be there to sustain me.***

### **XI. Jesus is nailed to the cross**

**Nailed to the wooden frame  
that stretched wide his arms and secured his feet,  
there on the Hill, he is raised above the people.**

They put him on the cross, flat, stretched out, as if they wanted to stop him from getting up again. Then they nailed him. His hand can no longer move! His hands that stretched out towards the humiliated and the sick and all those who had no more hope. He is nailed. He is fixed to the cross. Come close and have a look: the one who is nailed, the one who is fixed to the cross is Jesus, he is God! His arms are open as if to say: "Come and see: I am with you. Come and take: I am Love."

***It is you, O crucified Lord, who are the God of tenderness, given for the world!***

In everyone's life there comes a moment of truth. Suddenly, everything seems to be a cross: everything is valueless and pointless. It is man's dark night. No song remains in the heart: only a formless cry... Why? Oh my God, why? It is Job's cry, Jeremiah's cry. Jesus' cry. Everyman's cry. Yet "God is light, in him there is no darkness at all." Christ on the cross made man's light his own. It is ours, the cross Christ dies on. He is nailed with us, he is one with us. Because of him we are on a journey into light, whatever horrors may yet face us. By taking suffering and death into resurrection, God raises us all into his glorious day.

*Risen Lord, you are the sun that never sets. When we enter the darkness, shine on the pain of our loneliness and bring us onwards to a new dawn.*

***Lord, the hammering of the nails has echoed across this earth  
as we repeatedly crucify you.***

***Man against man, nation against nation.***

***Yet, from that cross of suffering with failing voice you called,  
'Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do.'***

***Father, forgive us.***

### **XII. Jesus dies on the Cross.**

**Naked on the Cross,  
he gazed at those whose fists were raised in anger,  
until he could see no more.  
There, in the late afternoon, with head bowed, body and spirit exhausted,  
he ceased to struggle. It was done.**

He wanted to announce the goodness of God. He wanted to share the tenderness of God. He wanted to give God's forgiveness to all people, whether worthy or unworthy of it. To all men and all women. He accomplished his mission. He stood firm. Now he cries out and dies on the cross. Come close and have a look: The one who is taken by death, just like any living thing on earth, he is Jesus, he is God! In dying he says to us all, "Do not be afraid when you are with me for I am Life!"

***It is you, O Lord, who help us conquer death!***

They offered him vinegar, sour wine. The wine pressed from the vintage of our toil. It is the bitter taste of the whole earth, the sweat of everyman, every country, every continent. It is all we have.... All goodness comes from God. Yet God accepts the offering of our bitterness as though it were essential element to the passion of Christ. 'It is accomplished' he says and dies. Man's bad is mysteriously transformed into good, a new measuring of love, infinitely full.

*"The glorious cross of the Risen Lord is the tree of my salvation; I eat its fruit, and in it I rejoice: in its roots I grow, in its branches I lie down. Its dew makes me glad, its breeze refreshes me; in its shadow I pitch my tent. The cross of the Risen One is my nourishment in anger, a spring of water to satisfy my thirst, clothing over my nakedness. When I am threatened, it is my defence. When I stumble it supports me. In victory it is my crown, in struggle it is my reward. O tree of eternal salvation, O pillar of the universe, O scaffolding of the world: your top touches the skies, and in your open arms, the love of God shines.*

***Lord, how are we to understand those hours late on a Friday?  
How can we share the emptiness of those who walked with you,  
seeing you now defeated, hung between thieves?***

***So this was where all the hours and days of walking and talking finally ended.  
Defeat on a Hill – and a satisfied crowd – Finished.***