

GOSPEL LESSON—John 18:1–19:42

The Apostle John told us things we don't find in the other Gospels and left out details that the Synoptics repeat. John tells us the name of the servant whose ear Peter cut off (Malchus.) John does not indicate the ear was healed by Jesus (Luke 22:51.) John very specifically tells us that the day Jesus was turned over to Pilate was the day of the Passover. John has a much more pointed and long answer to Pilate's question, "Are you the king of the Jews?" The mocking by the soldiers and the crown-of-thorns, are only found in John's Gospel. John tells us the place of the cross with more specificity, yet makes no mention of Simon carrying the cross. From John we surmise that Jesus was killed as is the Passover Lambs were sacrificed and only John reports the fact that Jesus put him in charge of Mary.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Ⓢ O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who for the transgressions of Your people, decided that Your Son should suffer strikes and blows, the righteous one for the unrighteous. We thank You for His work, that in His righteousness we are able to bring our prayers and petitions before You.

In this solemn hour of our worship, as we await the anniversary of the day of our Lord's Resurrection, help us to recall His suffering and death. As we commit ourselves body and soul into Your hand, promise to keep us in the deep serenity of the spirit which He maintained to the very last. Grant us the true and living trust that He displayed, that we may ever find ourselves kept in Your Holy and mighty care. Give us His perfect submission to Your Fatherly will, that we, too, may keep our soul in tranquility and peace now and in the hour of our death.

Help us understand that the darkness that attended His death, the earthquake and the opening of the tombs was nature herself mourning our Savior. In it we see the great evil done by our sin to the innocent blood of Jesus.

We contemplate in reverence the burial of Your Son Jesus Christ. We thank You that He sanctified our human body by His birth so also He sanctified our grave by His burial. When, in the time of our death, our bodies return to the earth from where they came, bless that place, O God, and grant that we may at the last day rise from there to eternal life. Look on the resting places of our loved ones, and let them speak to us of the assurance of joy in Heaven in unison with all our beloved who have departed in the one true faith.

Give Your grace to those passing through the valley of the shadows of death. Let them trust in You for complete deliverance from their illness.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. **(Time of silent prayer.)** These and all the things of our hearts, we bring to You for the sake of the name of Jesus Christ Who died to make us clean.

© **Amen.**

GOOD FRIDAY

Chant Tone



ENTRANCE PRAYER: Heavenly Father, help us to realize that it is an honor to serve You. As Your servants we confess our shortcoming and inability. We humbly pray that You would fill us with a larger measure of Your Spirit. In all our endeavors help us to seek only the honor of Your Holy name and the welfare of those who need the sharing of our love. Let no task be considered too small for our devotion. Grant that our courage may not falter when we face those larger opportunities that can be accomplished only through fervent prayer. Remind us that with You nothing is impossible, and without You nothing is worthwhile. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP IS ALL ABOUT DARKNESS. It would be difficult for us to understand the darkness that descended on the Apostles, disciples and others at the foot of the cross. When the unexpected noon to 3PM darkness had cleared, they still had to contend with the looming darkness of evening. Then they had to contend with the darkness of their grief and the darkness of their day. They had watched their Friend and Savior die. Even the expected death is a surprise. The death of someone who has suffered greatly brings us to a state of grief and suffering. The death of their Rabbi, threw them into a kind of confusion and a grief we can only imagine, which is why we celebrate the Good Friday. Good for us because in His death, Jesus earned for us salvation. We come to understand the feeling of suffering, to feel the tragedy of the death, that our understanding of our salvation, the freedom we were granted through His work would be all that much sweeter.

THEME OF THE DAY:

The Death of our Lord

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Isaiah 53:5;) Psalm 38:1-4, 18, 22
Isaiah is from our Old Testament Lesson. 53:5 especially reminds us that Jesus suffered and died for us. Psalm 38 was written by David and is perfect for Good Friday. David was in agony over his sin because at any point God could remove His blessing. Instead, as we know, Jesus went to the cross, just-so-that David's (and our) sin was forgiven.

COLLECT

Good Friday became a worship day immediately in the history of the church. (It is likely that the book of Mark is a Tre-Ore sermon preached by Peter.) The words of this Collect have been a part of Good Friday worship for centuries and thus we are together with the people who saw Jesus in the flesh as we pray. In this prayer we bring the church before God and express the willingness of Christ to die for us.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Isaiah 52:13–53:12

Terrible things were happening to the people of Israel. As Isaiah began his work among the two Southern Tribes (about 740 BC,) the 10 Northern Tribes were being taken into captivity. At the time this lesson, those 10 no longer existed and the two Southern Tribes had concentrated in Jerusalem as their neighbors were attacking and absorbing them. Still God continued to promise them a Savior, "if" they would be faithful. They failed. In spite of their failure God fulfilled all of His promises in Jesus.

GRADUAL—Hebrews 9:12a, c, 15a; Psalm 111:9a

Hebrews chapter 9 compares anything good in the Old Testament with the greater good of the Gospel of the New Testament. Jesus is the mediator of the New and much better covenant, for His is a contract of life with God. Psalm 111 is a Hallelujah (praise the Lord) Psalm for in it David, who intended this for worship, praised God in many ways and at all times.

EPISTLE LESSON—Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

The author of Hebrews wants us to know Jesus. In these six verses he very concisely explains the work and the person of Jesus as our High Priest. Jesus was not only the sacrifice for our sin, He was the Priest Who prepared the sacrifice. In His perfection as God, Jesus made the perfect sacrifice for our sin, just-so-that we would belong to Him forever.

VERSE—Isaiah 53:4

Isaiah 53:4 is from our Old Testament Lesson. There are two parts to this verse. The first is an explanation of what Jesus did for the people of the world. The second is the manner in which our sinful self viewed the work of Jesus, we didn't care.