

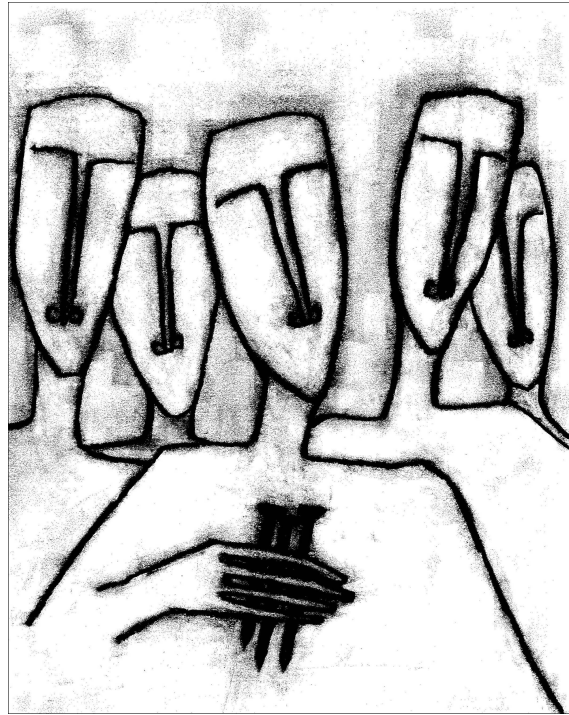
# GOOD FRIDAY

10 April, 2020

key time: 12 - 3 pm.

image: Jan Richardson

<https://www.janrichardsonimages.com/>



I fulfil my vows to you Lord,  
standing before your assembly.

Psalms 116.18

This year, we have to keep Holy Week and Easter differently - unable to gather, each finding our own ways to pray at home. For the great three days of the Triduum (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, & Easter) we are offering some ideas on how to structure time and keep these holy days. Each day, we invite you to take the key hours of prayer away from computers, telephones, sound and screen. Seek a quiet place to immerse yourself in sacred story.

Please read through the suggestions the day before or in the morning, so that you are ready to pray at the key hours. Adapt this however you wish. Share as you wish. There will also be links on our webpage ([walthamgroupchurches.co.uk](http://walthamgroupchurches.co.uk)) and facebook page ([facebook.com/walthamgroupchurches](https://facebook.com/walthamgroupchurches)). We wish you a blessed Triduum in this difficult year.

## PREPARING TO PRAY

On Good Friday, we remember Jesus' passion and keep watch at the cross. The Good Friday liturgy is always hard. It stretches over three hours, and invites us deep into silence, and into the depths of human suffering. The structure of the service and the fact of sharing it with others is part of what makes the depth of it bearable.

For most of us, in this year when we are all ready in grief and pain, it may be that we cannot push ourselves as far into the Passion Narrative, without others to journey with us. Therefore, today's resources offer a lot of choice. Whatever you do, it should be hard. Push yourself a bit further than you want to go. But it should also be humane. The cross is the way of life.

So, depending on what you choose, you may need:

- ♦ a bible or printed copies of the reading (see the web page)
- ♦ craft supplies for whatever activities you have chosen (set up and ready for 1 pm)
- ♦ a cross, or all the crosses you can find
- ♦ some note cards & a pen
- ♦ a copy of The Reproaches and/ or a globe or world map if you have one.

Please read through this in advance, so that you can adapt the plan to make it work for you. There are notes for praying with children at the end.

## 12 – 1 PM: THE PASSION

Please turn off all the electronic devices that might distract you. Ideally, you will step away from screens and distractions for the full three hours, but there is a 'break' each hour when you can do what you must. There is also an exception in the middle hour if you are praying with children.

## 12 – 1 PM (CONTINUED)

For this hour, you will need a bible (or print-outs of the readings), a place to be, and maybe some note cards and a pen.

- ♦ Begin by finding stillness. Close your eyes, or light a candle. Take a few breaths. Ask God to help you be present. Wait.
- ♦ You may wish to use this prayer at the start of each hour:  
'We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,  
because by your Holy Cross  
you have redeemed the world.

### READ

- ♦ Read the whole of the Passion Narrative: Jn 18:1-19:42  
If you possibly can, read this aloud, while standing up. It will feel strange at first, but before long the story itself will take over. I cannot tell you why doing it this way is so powerful, but it is. If there are several of you praying in your own house, you may wish to spend this hour in separate rooms, so that you can each read it aloud for yourselves.

### PRAY

- ♦ After the reading, stay still for a few minutes, then sit somewhere to pray. Keep silences for as long as you can, letting the story of the passion hold you.
- ♦ when your prayer is complete, if it is before 12.45 pm, this is one of the times to connect with others. Write a card to someone who is on your mind today. Remind them they are loved.
- ♦ 12.45 - 1 pm. Take a break. Stay off electronic devices if you can, and keep as much stillness and quiet as you can, but go for a walk around the garden, listen to the birds, make a cup of tea. Get out any resources you need for the second hour.

## 1 -2 PM: THE CROSS

During this hour, we focus on the cross. This year, the means of that is very gentle, because most of us are carrying enough fear and pain. If you wish to go deeper, simply light a candle before a cross, watch and pray.

Begin with the prayer:

'We adore you O Christ, and we bless you,  
because by your Holy Cross  
you have redeemed the world.'

Either:

PLAY

Make a cross – however you wish.

There are links on the web page for salt-dough crosses, 'God's Eyes', and mandalas. But do whatever will help you focus on the cross during this hour.

or:

Gather all the crosses you have in the house, of whatever description. Spend the first 20 minutes in silence, handling them, pondering them. Spend the next 20 - 30 minutes either sharing stories with your household about where the crosses come from, where you got them, what they mean to you, or write you memories of the crosses, and what they have meant to you at different points in your life.

1.45 - 2 pm: take a break.

## 2 - 3 PM: PRAY FOR THE WORLD

If you usually share in the Good Friday Liturgy, you may wish to use this hour to pray The Reproaches. These are the traditional prayers of Good Friday, when we hear God's pain at human cruelty and sin.

If The Reproaches are not normally part of your Good Friday prayers, it might be best to leave them for another year, when you have the support of the community.

Instead: use the 'map prayers' below.

## 2 - 3 PM (CONTINUED)

### PRAY

#### **Either: The Reproaches (30 - 40 min)**

- ✦ Find a place to pray where you will feel safe to cry or rage or feel complicated things. For most of us, this means being alone.
- ✦ Slowly read and pray the reproaches, allowing silence between each stanza. Notice what you are feeling, what thoughts and images come to mind. Stay with the emotions.
- ✦ When you reach the end, 'talk' with God about what you have experienced – listen for what wants you to hear today.
- ✦ If you finish early, see 'reaching out' below.

#### **Or: Map Prayers (20 -30 min)**

- ✦ Gather everyone together around a large map or a globe. If you don't have either, print out or draw some small pictures for different parts of the world, and spread them across the dining room table. Get some post-it notes, or small pieces of paper, and some pens.
- ✦ Write or draw prayers for different places around the world. What does God's love look like in each place?

### CONNECT

#### **Reaching out (20 - 30 min.)**

If your prayers have come to a natural close, spend the last 20 minutes writing a card or two to people who might be feeling alone at this time. Remind them they are loved.

## 2.50 - 3 PM: LETTING GO

You need to find a way to release the emotion of the past few hours. Now is the time to sing a hymn, listen (or dance to) a piece of music, or to smash water balloons

and scream. Don't try to go straight from this deep difficult time of prayer straight back into normal life without making a transition.

The words to The Royal Banners forward Go are linked not to the webpage. That is the hymn we usually sing in church at the end of the Three Hours.

## PRAYING WITH CHILDREN

It is highly unlikely that any child will be able to pray and focus on the story of the cross and passion for 3 hours. So, this is a juggling act: how can the adults create enough space and silence for their own prayer to be challenging, while also helping children do something meaningful?

If you have **two adults in the house**, I suggest that one of you takes the first hour to pray, you all join together for the second hour, and the other takes the third hour to pray.

If you only have **one adult in the house**, then everything depends on the age and temperament of your child(ren).

You will also want to decide how much can your children bear right now. This might not be the year to help them face the harder parts of the story of Jesus' crucifixion. It might be enough to say:

"This is the day we remember Jesus' death.

It was a hard day, and Jesus was scared.

But Jesus knew absolutely that God loved him, and that God's love was going to be stronger than anything else that could happen. Jesus died to help us learn that love is stronger than death, and no matter what happens, God finds a way to give us life.'

**Here are some suggestions.**

- ✦ **Same pattern, shorter times:** If your children are able to cope with hearing the story of Jesus' death right now, go ahead and read or tell them the story, and invite them into 5 - 10 minutes silence (staring at a candle, or doodling on a page). Then, let them play as normal for the rest of the hour. From 1- 2 make crosses together. At

2 pm, let them play in the garden or read or paint, and all gather together at 2.50 to say the Lord's prayer.

- ♦ **More activities:** Choose more than one of the craft actives, spread them across the 3 hours, interspersing with a run around the garden.
- ♦ **Choose one thing, for one hour.** Or 30 minutes, or 10 minutes. Just do what you can!

There are craft activities and recipes on the web page:

[walthamgroupchurches.co.uk](http://walthamgroupchurches.co.uk)

