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Uniting Church



THE COMMUNITY OF JESUS
ARISES UNDER THE CROSS

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INTROIT (Fijian)

GREETING

We gather again on this Good Friday
at the foot of the cross which calls us on,
though religious and political powers sought to mock and shame
we gather,
not in shame,
not in fear
but more deeply into the costly journey
towards life.

There is wounding, there is weeping.

In Jesus as the Promised One,
God is not separated from that costly journey.

"The Good Fridays of Our Lives"

By Andrew Pakula

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the Burrumattagal people of the Darug Nation, the first inhabitants of this place, as the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to their ancient culture, their elders past and present and their emerging leaders. We acknowledge the presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside within this area. We honour them for their custodianship of the land, on which we gather today.

On this Good Friday, we remember their Good Friday experiences in this their country: dispossession, black deaths in custody, stolen generations, loss of languages, culture, land, racism and many other daily experiences.

GATHERING

If we truly enter the life of Good Friday,
this day is clouded in the grey space
of the Christian year:

when all our senses and their feelings, imagination,
thinking, our inner being,
experience a heavy veil drawn over them.

It feels like the lights are dimmed
and the sky feels overcast.
Words are unable to speak this sad day.

We resist the grey areas,
we look for cloudless, sunny skies,
avoid darkness, colour it with bright colours!

This morning, through our readings, music and drama,
We are invited to accompany Jesus through this grey day:

In this grey day lie all the sorrows
and failings of a humanity
that strives for high success,
yet comes up against human limitations,
and falls to the ground in despair.

Here is a day marked by the brokenness of the world.

But it is not a day for despair and overpowering sadness!
It is a time to remember how it was for Jesus,
and find at the foot of the cross
a place to lay down ours and the world's sorrow.

On grey days it is hard to see clearly,
difficult to understand things that aren't clear.

Let us be present to the sacred story as it is retold,
and to listen for God in the suffering of Jesus, in humanity.

CHOIR (FIJIAN)

THE STORY OF THE CRUCIFIXION

As you can see, the man has done nothing that deserves death, so I shall have him flogged and then let him go.”

But altogether they howled, “Away with him! Give us Barabbas!”

Pilate was anxious to set Jesus free and addressed them again, but they shouted back, “Crucify, crucify him!”

HYMN *O Sacred Head sore wounded 339 (v 3, 4)*

1. O sacred head sore wounded,
with grief and shame weighed down;
O kingly head surrounded
with thorns your only crown;
death's shadows rise before you,
the glow of life decays;
yet hosts of heaven adore you
and tremble as they gaze.

2. What language shall I borrow
to praise you, heavenly friend,
for this your dying sorrow,
your mercy without end?
Such agony and dying!
Such love to sinners free!
O Christ, all grace supplying,
turn now your face on me.

3. In this your bitter Passion,
good Shepherd, think of me,
look on me with compassion,
unworthy though I be:
beneath your cross abiding
for ever would I rest,
in your dear love confiding,
and with your presence blessed.

4. Lord, be my consolation,
my shield when death is near;
remind me of your Passion,
be with me when I fear.
My eyes shall then behold you,
upon your cross shall dwell,
my heart by faith enfold you;
and who dies thus, dies well.

ENTERING GOOD FRIDAY

As we confess our human failings,
Our denials, greed, our sleepiness,
We place our lives at the foot of your cross, O Christ.
***Gather us into the ultimate love which lies there.
Forgive us, heal us and restore us, we pray.***

As we bow our heads before you,
we acknowledge that every generation of humankind
has some part in the crucifying of good.
None of us has clean hands.
All of us have betrayed you in some way,
both within our own journeys
and as part of a wider community
which allows injustice, exploitation and lack of compassion
to survive, year after year.

A silence is kept

***We place our lives at the foot of your cross, O Christ.
Gather us into the ultimate love which lies there.***

Forgive us, heal us and restore us, we pray.

For we believe on this day, that the way of your cross
is the pathway towards the rising of life.

Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

The cross which stands before us
is the witness to God's never-ending grace.
Here we know a Christ who would rather die
than stop loving us.
As we wait here in faith, our sins are forgiven!
Thanks be to God. Amen!
(Source: Dorothy McRae McMahon)

THE CROSS IS RAISED

READING 3 *JESUS CRUCIFIED* John 19: 16-27
(LEIGH FIJIAN READER)

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus.
17 Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which
in Aramaic is called Golgotha). 18 There they crucified him, and with
him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.
19 Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read:
JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ...
23 When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing
them into four shares, one for each of them, ...

THE COMMUNITY OF JESUS ARISES UNDER THE CROSS

(LEIGH FIJIAN READER CONTINUES)

25 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary
the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother
there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her,
"Woman, here is your son," 27 and to the disciple, "Here is your
mother."
From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

READING 4 *IT IS FINISHED* John 19: 28-30
(LEIGH MEMORIAL READER)

Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that
Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." 29 A jar of wine
vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a
stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.

Pause in Silence

30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said,
“It is finished.”
With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

A BLACK CLOTH IS DRAPED OVER THE CROSS

HYMN *Were you there when they crucified my Lord (345 v1, 2)*

1. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
 were you there when they crucified my Lord?
 O sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;
 were you there when they crucified my Lord?

2. Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
 were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
 O sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;
 were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

4. Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
 Were you there when the sun refused to shine??
 O sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;
 Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

5. were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
 Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
 O sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;
 Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

READING 5 *THE BURIAL*
(LEIGH FIJIAN READER)

John 19: 38, 41

Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away.

At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

CHOIR (FIJIAN)

MEDITATION



Weeping our truth

HYMN *A man of ancient time and place, (Tune: 'Tallis' 443 TiS)*

A man of ancient time and place
with foreign speech & foreign face,
reveals the glory, power and grace
of costly, unexpected love.

A rabbi, schooled in Moses' Law,
a male, amending Herod's flaw,
arouses wonder, rage and awe
with costly, unexpected love.

By teasing word and healing deed,
a leper touched, an outcast freed,
he bears the fruit and plants the seed
of costly, unexpected love.

The cost we barely can surmise
when, lifted up before our eyes,
the face of God we recognise
in crucified, unfathomed love.

May faith and hope within us grow,
the way of Christ to tell and show,
and may the Spirit breathe and blow
in costly, unexpected love.

Brian Wren

BLESSING

Let us walk forward in faith towards Easter Day,
accompanied by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ.

And may deathliness
begin to blossom into life,
grieving see glimpses
of the arrival of joy
and Jesus Christ
be before us,
behind us
and within us. *Amen.*

We leave Good Friday service in silence
in our own time
and walk towards the rising of Easter Day.