



## READINGS & COLLECT FOR GOOD FRIDAY 10 APRIL 2020

### Reading 1: from *The Dream of the Rood*

In this first Christian poem in English, dating from the eighth century, the cross, the *Rood*, itself speaks:

“It was long past – I still remember it –  
That I was cut down and the cypse’s end,  
Moved from my root. Strong enemies there took me,  
Told me to hold aloft their criminals,  
Made me a spectacle. Men carried me  
Upon their shoulders, set me on a hill,  
A host of enemies there fastened me.

“And then I saw the Lord of all mankind  
Hasten with eager zeal that He might mount  
Upon me. I durst not against God’s word  
Bend down or break, when I saw tremble all  
The surface of the earth. Although I might  
Have struck down all the foes, yet stood I fast.

“Then the young hero (who was God almighty)  
Got ready, resolute and strong in heart.  
He climbed onto the lofty gallows-tree,  
Bold in the sight of many watching men,  
When He intended to redeem mankind.  
I trembled as the warrior embraced me.  
But still I dared not bend down to the earth,  
Fall to the ground. Upright I had to stand.

“A rood I was raised up; and I held high  
The noble King, the Lord of heaven above.  
I dared not stoop. They pierced me with dark nails;  
The scars can still be clearly seen on me,  
The open wounds of malice. Yet might I  
Not harm them. They reviled us both together.  
I was made wet all over with the blood  
Which poured out from His side, after He had  
Sent forth His spirit. And I underwent  
Full many a dire experience on that hill.

I saw the God of hosts stretched grimly out.  
Darkness covered the Ruler's corpse with clouds  
His shining beauty; shadows passed across,  
Black in the darkness. All creation wept,  
Bewailed the King's death; Christ was on the cross.....

“Now you may understand, dear warrior,  
That I have suffered deeds of wicked men  
And grievous sorrows. Now the time has come  
That far and wide on earth men honour me,  
And all this great and glorious creation,  
And to this beacon offers prayers. On me  
The Son of God once suffered; therefore now  
I tower mighty underneath the heavens,  
And I may heal all those in awe of me.  
Once I became the cruellest of tortures,  
Most hateful to all nations, ‘til the time  
I opened the right way of life for men.”

*The second reading starts on the next page*

**Reading 2: *Good Friday* by George Herbert**

Note how the type setting of each stanza forms the sign of a cross.  
The word 'score' in the second line of the third stanza means 'mark'.

Oh my chief good,  
How shall I measure out thy blood?  
How shall I count what thee befell,  
And each grief tell

Shall I thy woes  
Number according to thy foes?  
Or, since one star show'd thy first breath,  
Shall all thy death?

Or shall each leaf,  
Which falls in autumn score a grief?  
Or cannot leaves, but fruit, be sign,  
Of the true vine?

Then let each hour  
Of my whole life one grief devour;  
That thy distress through all may run,  
And be my sun.

Or rather let  
My several sins their sorrows get;  
That, as each beast his cure doth know,  
Each sin may so.

**Reading 3: from *The Everlasting Mercy* by John Masefield**

O Christ who holds the open gate,  
O Christ who drives the furrow straight,  
O Christ, the plough, O Christ, the laughter  
Of holy white birds flying after,  
Lo, all my heart's field red and torn,  
And Thou wilt bring the young green corn,  
The young green corn divinely springing,  
The young green corn forever singing;  
And when the field is fresh and fair  
Thy blessed feet shall glitter there,  
And we will walk the weeded field,  
And tell the golden harvest's yield,  
The corn that makes the holy bread  
By which the soul of man is fed,  
The holy bread, the food unpriced,  
Thy everlasting mercy, Christ.

**Reading 4: *Good Friday* by Christina Rossetti**

Am I a stone, and not a sheep,  
That I can stand, O Christ, beneath Thy cross,  
To number drop by drop Thy blood's slow loss  
And yet not weep?

Not so those women loved  
Who with exceeding grief lamented Thee;  
Not so fallen Peter weeping bitterly;  
Not so the thief was moved;

Not so the Sun and Moon  
Which hid their faces in a starless sky,  
A horror of great darkness at broad noon –  
I, only I.

Yet give not o'er,  
But seek Thy sheep, true Shepherd of the flock;  
Greater than Moses, turn and look once more  
And smite a rock.

**Reading 5: *Luke 23:50-56a***

Now there was a man named Joseph,  
a member of the Council,  
a good and upright man,  
who had not consented to their decision and action.  
He came from the Judean town of Arimathea  
and he was waiting for the kingdom of God.  
Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body.  
Then he took it down,  
wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock,  
one in which no-one had yet been laid.  
It was the Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee  
followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it.  
Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes.

**Collect**

Eternal God,  
in the cross of Jesus  
we see the cost of our sin  
and the depth of your love:  
in humble hope and fear  
may we place at his feet  
all that we have and all that we are,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Clive Lemmon*