

St James Choir+ small group gathering

Good Friday Meditation

Stations of the Cross

Opening Prayer

O Saviour of the world,
what have you done to deserve this?
and what have we done to deserve you?

Strung up between criminals,
cursed and spat upon,
you wait for death,
and look for us,
for us whose sin has crucified you.

To the mystery of undeserved suffering,
you bring the deeper mystery of unmerited love.

**Forgive us for not knowing what we have done;
open our eyes to what we are doing now,
as, through wood and nails,
you disempower our depravity
and transform us by your grace.
Amen.**

1. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me.” He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.” When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, “So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:36-41)



The Agony in the Garden, El Greco (Spanish, 1590)

2. Jesus is Betrayed by Judas and Arrested

While Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, “the man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely.” He came and immediately went over to him and said, “Rabbi.” And he kissed him. At this they laid hands on him and arrested him. (Mark 14: 43-46)



The Taking of Christ with the Malchus Episode, Gérard Douffet (Belgian, c. 1620)



Conscience: Judas, Nikolai Ge (Russian, 1891)

3. Jesus is Condemned by the Sanhedrin

When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. They said, “If you are the Messiah, tell us,” but he replied to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” They all asked, “Are you then the Son of God?” He replied to them, “You say that I am.” Then they said, “What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth.” (Luke 22: 66-71)



(Sorry, don't know about this one; National Geographic website:
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/people-in-the-bible/why-caiaphas-broke-jewish-law-indict-jesus/>)

4. Jesus is Denied by St. Peter

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maids came over to him and said, “You too were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about!” As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, “This man was with Jesus the Nazorean.” Again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man!” A little later the bystanders came over and said to Peter, “Surely you too are one of them; even your speech gives you away.” At that he began to curse and to swear, “I do not know the man.” And immediately a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had spoken: “Before the cock crows you will deny me three times.” He went out and began to weep bitterly. (Matthew 26: 69-75)



The Denial of Saint Peter, Caravaggio (Italy, 1610)

5. Jesus is Judged by Pontius Pilate

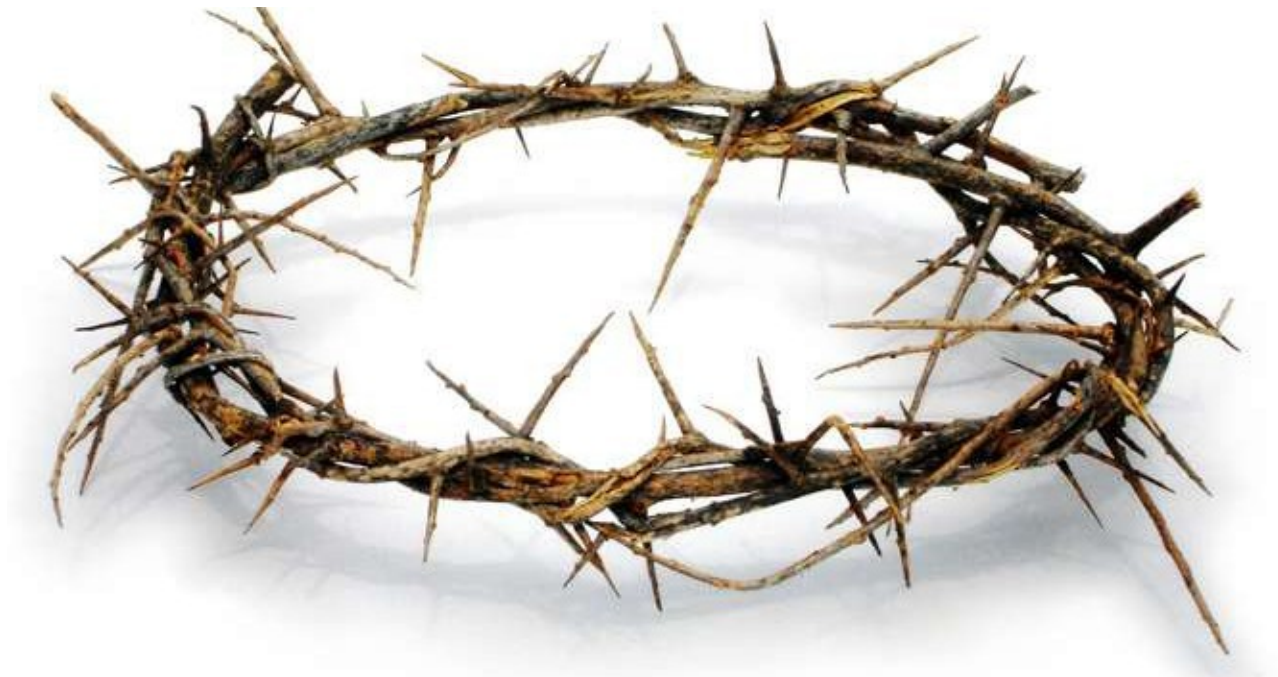
The chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” He said to him in reply, “You say so.” The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, “Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of.” Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.... Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas and handed Jesus over to be crucified. (Mark 15: 1-5, 15)



What is Truth?: Christ and Pilate, Nikolai Ge (Russian, 1891)

6. Jesus is Scourged at the Pillar and Crowned with Thorns

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck him repeatedly. (John 19: 1-3)



from <https://thefrontporch.org/2015/04/crown-of-thorns/>

7. Jesus Bears the Cross

When the chief priests and the guards saw Jesus they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him.” ... They cried out, “Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your king?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. (John 19: 6, 15-17)



The Way to Calvary, Andrea di Bartolo. (Italian, c.1400)

8. Jesus is Helped by Simon the Cyrenian to Carry the Cross

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. (Mark 15: 21)



Christ Carrying the Cross, Sebastiano del Piombo (Italian, about 1513-14)

9. Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

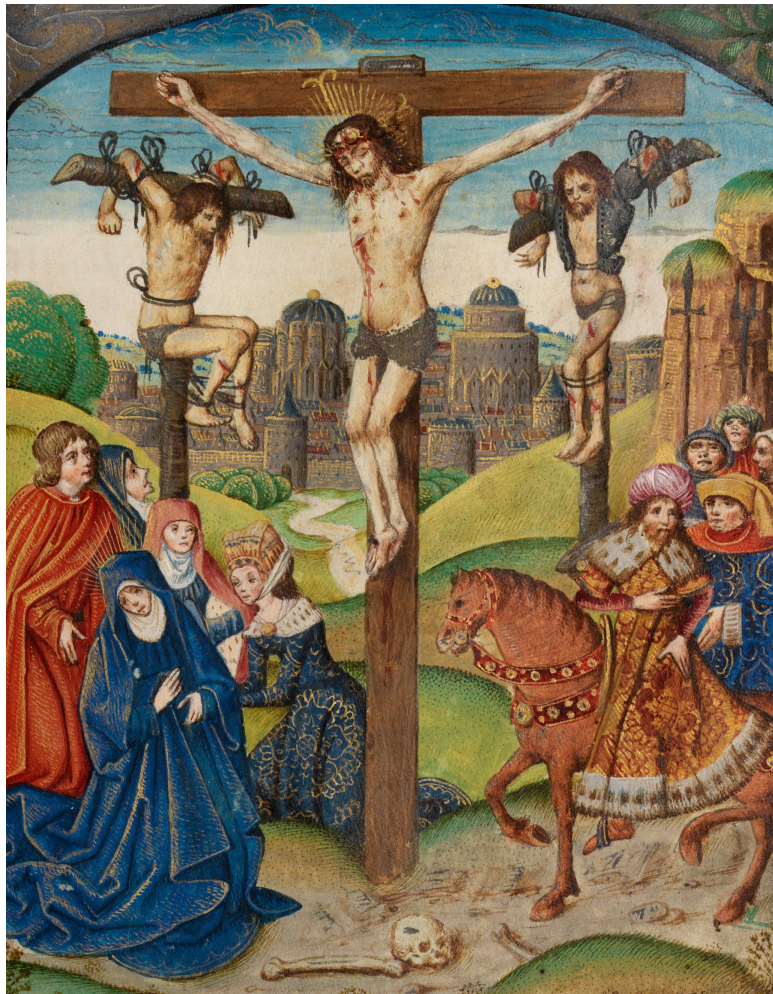
A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.’ At that time, people will say to the mountains, ‘Fall upon us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’ for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?” (Luke 23: 27-31)



Jesus Speaks to the Women of Jerusalem, Eric Gill (English, 1917)

10. Jesus is Crucified

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. [Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.”] (Luke 23: 33-34)



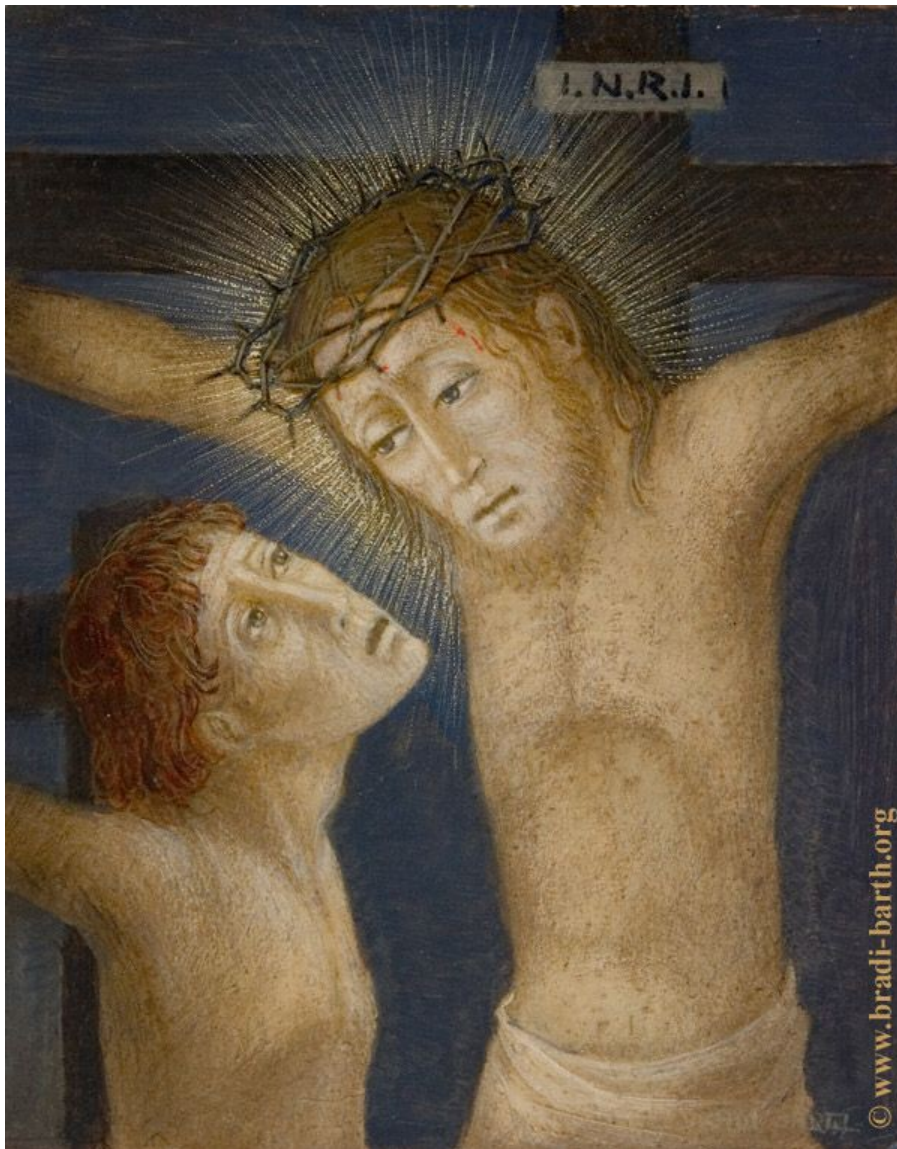
Christ on the Cross between two thieves, from the Vaux Passional (English, c. 1503-4)



Crucifixion, seen from the Cross, James Tissot (French, c. 1890)

11. Jesus Promises His Kingdom to the Good Thief

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us.” The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, “Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He replied to him, “Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23: 39-43)

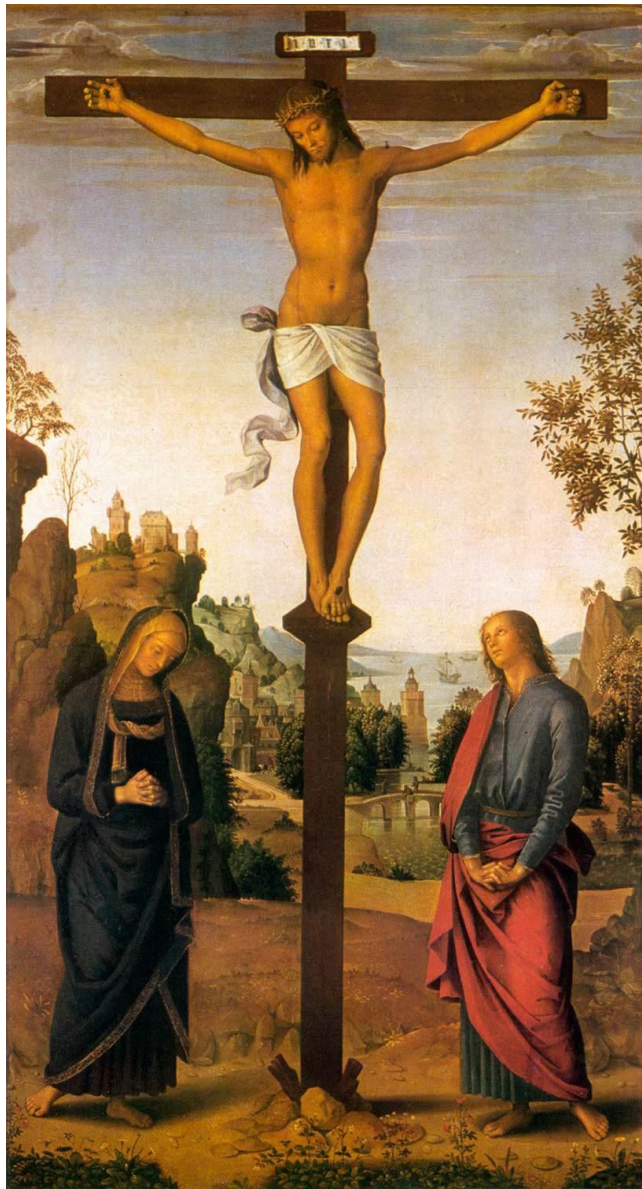


Christ and the Thief, Bradi Barth (Belgian, 1922-2007)

Look her up – she’s *amazing*! <http://www.bradi-barth.org/galerie-bradi.php>

12. Jesus Speaks to His Mother and the Beloved Disciple

Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (John 19: 25-27)



Crucifixion with the Virgin and Saint John, Pietro Perugino (Italian, c. 1482)

13. Jesus Dies on the Cross

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit”; and when he had said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23: 44-46)



Jesus dies on the cross, Adolf Lachmann (Czech, 1998)
More here: <http://adolflachman.cz/cat/projects/calvary/>

14. Jesus is Placed in the Tomb

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be handed over. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance to the tomb and departed. (Matthew 27: 57-60)



The Lamentation of Christ, Andrea Mantegna (Italian, c. 1480)



The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb, Hans Holbein (German, c. 1520–22)

Let us listen to these words of Jesus.

I am the good shepherd
and I know my sheep, and I lay down my life for them.

There is no greater love than this
that a man should lay down his life for his friends
and you are my friends
if you do what I have commanded.

Whoever believes in me, I will never turn away.
Whoever has faith in me, even though he or she dies,
will live forever.

Now I am going to my Father and your Father,
to my God and your God,
but I shall come back
and take you to myself,
that where I am, you may be also.

Blessing

May Christ the crucified convince you that God loves you and has forgiven you, and the blessing of God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Giver of life be with you always. Amen.