

Good Friday Service 2015

Process in silence, youth wearing black and holding candles. Congregation stands.

John 13: 21, 26-27, 30

After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me...It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. "What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him. When Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

Roman Soldier Monologue

I am a Roman Soldier. I have worked for Pilate-The Roman governor of Jerusalem-for over 20 years. I have witnessed hundreds of crucifixions, but one thing I have never witnessed was a crucified man asking his god to forgive his executors. I remember him calling to his god and saying, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." In that instant I thought "why do I need forgiveness" this man was condemned by his own people to die. I have been charged with nothing. In the next instant, I looked down and saw the robe that I won in a game with the other soldiers. It was the man's robe – Jesus, the "King of the Jews", the Messiah. What had I done? What could I do?

Song *Were You There When they Crucified my Lord?*

Woman Monologue

My child was healed by this man – Jesus Christ- who hangs on a cross to die of false charges. I know this man is the messiah. He saved my daughter simply because I believed in him. He saved her from death only to die because of who he is. Why should this man die? He only helped people! He never once hurt a soul- unlike the two men that hang next to him. Those of us who knew him and were touched and changed by him will always know and believe him. He dies because he is our Messiah, our Savior. My daughter's life, my life--saved because he loves us!

Psalms 22: 14-20

¹⁴ I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
¹⁵ my mouth^[a] is dried up like a potsherd,

and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

¹⁶ For dogs are all around me;
a company of evildoers encircles me.

My hands and feet have shriveled; ^[b]

¹⁷ I can count all my bones.

They stare and gloat over me;

¹⁸ they divide my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.

¹⁹ But you, O LORD, do not be far away!

O my help, come quickly to my aid!

²⁰ Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life ^[c] from the power of the dog!

Song *Ubi Caritas*

Thief Monologue

I am the thief. Actually, I am one of the infamous thieves. I am a thief whose life changed at death. My life consisted of heinous acts of crime that led me to be crucified. I was condemned to die—only to live because of the man I was hanging next to. Many of the witnesses to our deaths mocked this man and spit upon Him in disgrace. He wore a crown of thorns because He was said to be the “King of the Jews”. As he died, I knew that this man was special, that he was the Messiah. Nine little words changed my soul...”Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he did as he promised! He remembered me...he remembered me – A THIEF.

Mary Magdalene Monologue

My heart is breaking as I watch the only person who ever really saw me, I mean really saw me, prepare to die a shameful and horrid death. Jesus knew me, forgave me and loved me just as I am. I was treated with disgust and scorned upon by all who looked at me, thinking they knew me and what I done. I felt worthless. Jesus changed my life; he gave me the gift of faith, faith in God and believing in myself. He restored my dignity and gave me hope that life could be different than the misery I was experiencing. How can I go on? How can any of us possibly go on without Him? But He tells us we must...that we must go on doing what he has taught us to do, but how?...my heart is breaking.

Song *Bless the Lord My Soul*

Carpenter Monologue

I am a carpenter. Unfortunately, because I work with wood, hammer and nails on a daily basis, I am often expected to assist with crucifixions. It is not the best part of my job, but I am well paid for it. Do you have any idea what happens to a man sentenced to crucifixion? Do you have an idea what the proper procedure is for nailing a man to a piece of wood?

After a man is sentenced, flogging is a legal preliminary to an execution. The instrument used for flogging is a short whip with several braided leather thongs of different lengths. Each thong had a small iron ball or sharp pieces of sheep bones tied to the ends. The back...the buttocks and the legs were whipped by soldiers. The iron balls caused deep contusions...the leather thongs and sheep bones would cut into the skin and into the skeletal muscles. Along with the pain, this caused ribbons of bleeding flesh. Flogging was intended to weaken the victim just short of collapsing or death.

After the flogging, it was custom that the sentenced man would carry his own crossbeam to the crucifixion spot. The Romans did not invent crucifixion...but they perfected it as a form of torture and capital punishment. It was designed to produce a slow death with maximum pain and suffering.

Crucifixion was used for slaves, foreigners, revolutionaries and the worst criminals because it was the most disgraceful form of execution.

When it's time to nail a man to the cross, he is thrown to the ground and iron spikes...about five to seven inches long...were driving through the wrists, rather than the palms. The driven nail would crush or sever a large nerve in the wrist that would stimulate excruciating bolts of fiery pain in both arms. The wrist was used, rather than the palm because the nail in this location would better support the weight of each victim. Each wound was intended to produce intense agony.

When nailing a man to the cross, you always remembered to have respect for him a human being by never looking into his eyes.

The feet were nailed one on top of each other to the cross. In the same way, the spike was positioned to pierce the feet without breaking any bones or resulting in too much loss of blood.

Now that the victim is nailed to the cross...and lifted in front of a mocking taunting crowd...death will come in 3 to 4 hours or 3 to 4 days.

But it won't be an easy death. Breathing is agonizing. Remember the victim's back is a bloody, raw mess of open wounds because of the flogging done before the crucifixion. With each attempt to inhale, the body lifts the bleeding wounded flesh and presses against the rough wood of the cross.

It is pain beyond description.

As the victim continues to struggle to breathe, his arms and muscles are burning. The weight of the body from outstretched arms and shoulders means that each gasp for air means more movement on the cross and more pain.

By law, the victim was given a bitter drink of wine mixed with myrrh, a mild painkiller. The two main causes of death on a cross are exhaustion or heart failure.

I witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus the one who was to be the Messiah. He died quickly, yet endured all the agony of any Roman crucifixion.

Song *When Jesus Wept*

Mary Monologue

I am the mother of the man on that cross. He was once helpless and cooing in my arms. Now he is bleeding and moaning, lifeless. I remember the day the angel came to tell me I was to have a son. I couldn't imagine life with a child then and now I can't imagine life without my child, my son, Jesus. Oh Dear Lord take this pain from me...take that pain from him. (pause) I know it is done. It is supposed to be this way. But why was I chosen to be his mother? This pain is unbearable.

Song *How Deep the Father's Love*

Last Words

⁴⁴ It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed;¹ and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said,

1. Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?
2. My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?
3. Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.
4. It is finished

Hammering on the cross

All youth depart in silence holding their candles

Congregation leaves