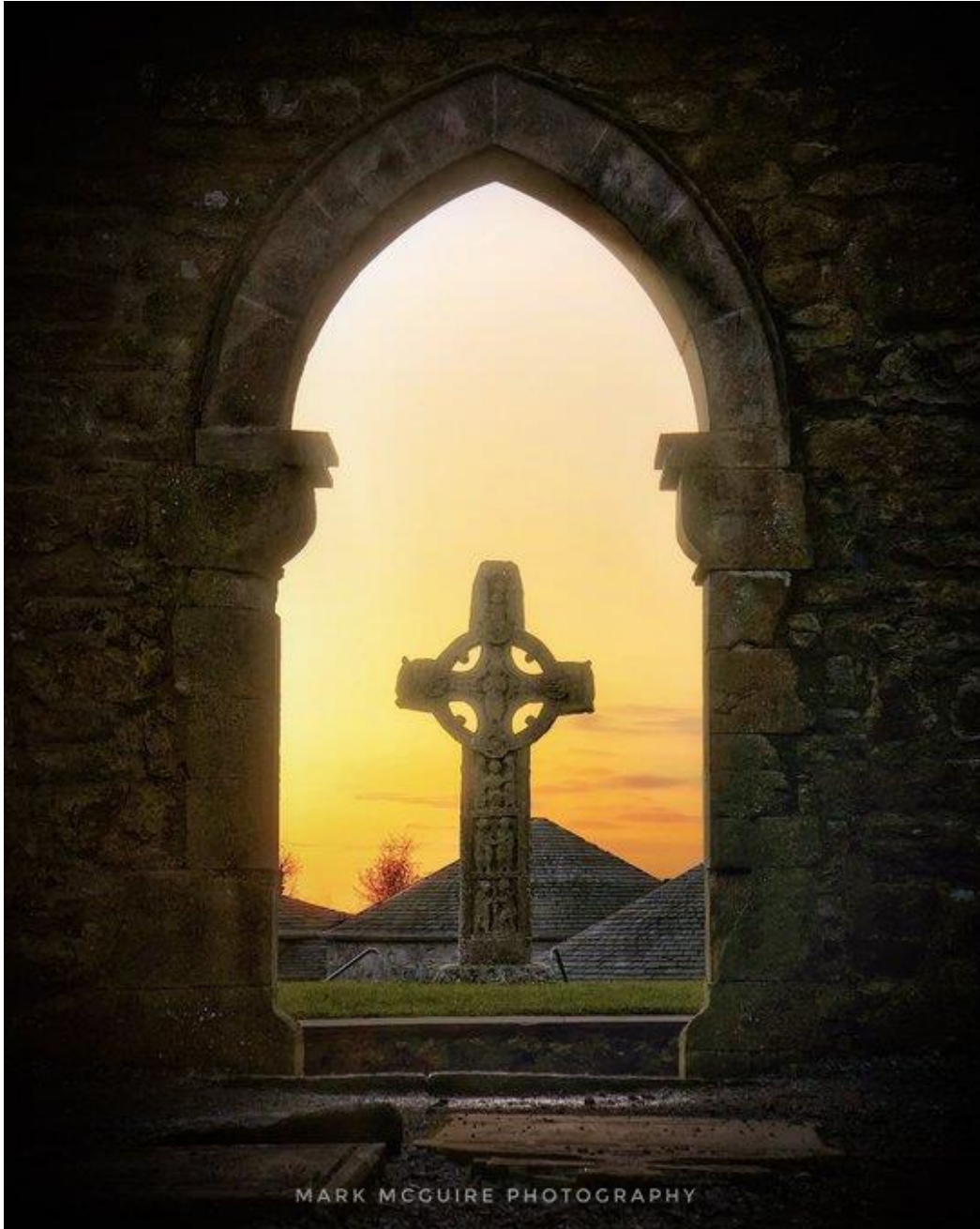


**Sunday 17 March 2024**

# Passion Sunday

(and Fifth Sunday of Lent)



MARK MCGUIRE PHOTOGRAPHY

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The hymn is a YouTube link. Please click on the links to hear it.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,  
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## Introduction and welcome

**HYMN 1** [O the deep, deep love of Jesus](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

## The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

**All Amen.**

The Lord be with you

**All And also with you.**

## The Preparation

**All Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**All Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart God will not despise. Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion, and confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**All**    **Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour  
in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry  
and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past  
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life  
to the glory of your name.  
Amen.**

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All**    **Amen.**

### **The Collect for Passion Sunday (and Fifth Sunday of Lent)**

Most merciful God,  
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ  
delivered and saved the world:  
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross  
we may triumph in the power of his victory;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**All**    **Amen.**

## First reading

A reading from the Book of the prophet Jeremiah

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

*Jeremiah 31:31-34*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not presume to take this honour, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'; as he says also in another place, 'You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.' In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

*Hebrews 5:1-10*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2** [Jerusalem, my destiny](#)  
[Peace to you](#)

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

## **Gospel reading**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

**All** **Glory to you O Lord.**

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.

'Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. The crowd answered him, 'We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?' Jesus said to them, 'The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.' After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.

*John 12:20-33*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All** **Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

Today marks the start of Passiontide. The time when we begin the last stages of our journey, with Jesus, towards the foot of the cross. Perhaps now, more than ever we see Jesus as a man of extraordinary strength and courage as he prepares to face what lies ahead.

Fear is a very powerful enemy and the writer of the letter to the Hebrews gives us a picture of Jesus praying, crying, begging to be saved from death. I'm sure most of us can recognise that feeling of fear. Fear: it can be a horrible feeling, palpitation in your chest, stop you in your tracks, gut wrenching kind of feeling.

Jesus sees the danger that is lying ahead of him during Holy Week, but he continues his work of teaching and healing. He doesn't look for suffering but he faces it knowing full well what it will include.

He knows he will suffer in his body all that human cruelty has to offer and from what I can gather, crucifixion is just about as cruel as it gets. He knows he will suffer in mind, all the misery, hurt and humiliation we can inflict on each other. Indeed, he already knows what it's like to be laughed and rejected. I don't think we can know if he foresees suffering, in spirit, possibly, with the despair of feeling abandoned by God at the moments of his greatest need. I think Jesus has already been through such moments of doubt and darkness and may well be afraid it'll happen again.

So, when we suffer in body, mind, or spirit we find, in Jesus, a God who has the most intimate knowledge of our human pain and grief. We see that, like us, Jesus knows about the inevitability of suffering, that it's part of what it is to be human and that it can be very frightening. It's possible that over the years we've become used to the idea that God enters into the pain and suffering of this world. But has that idea become a reality for us?

This Passiontide, I wonder if there is anything new we can learn about facing and coping with fear and suffering from walking alongside Jesus on the road to the cross? A few reflections:

Jesus lives with the knowledge of what is to come for a long time so we find in him, a God who knows that sometimes it takes enormous courage and determination to live, day by day, with a weight on our hearts and a cross on our shoulder.

Jesus knows the times of temptation and despair when it all just seems too much and we long for a way out. He knows what it takes to draw on our last ounce of strength just to get through another day.

People who seek Jesus do so because they want something from him. They want teaching, healing or blessing. Some want him to be their king, to liberate Israel from

Roman occupation. For me, it feels like very few people actually thought for him and his needs.

So, Jesus knows that the courage and determination to keep going often go unrecognised by others. He knows the secret struggles we face. What it's like when people have unrealistic expectations of us and what it's like to have constant demands made of us. I see Jesus as living these days at the absolute limit of what he can cope with and I imagine so lonely in the knowledge that no-one understands what he is doing.

Jesus makes his choice and faces the cross. We, too, must make some choices about how we live this Passiontide.

We can choose to walk with Jesus, maybe just part of the way. We can come here on Palm Sunday, wave our palms and sing Hosanna, come on Easter Day and sing Alleluia. We don't have to come on Good Friday and say 'Crucify him' and hear 'Why have you forsaken me?'

But that's not how the story goes! We'd be missing the mystery at the heart of our faith, that God's love does not fail, even on the cross, even towards those who crucified him.

The other choice is to walk alongside Jesus for the whole journey. We can accompany him day by day during Holy Week. We can enter into his story, knowing that somehow, it's our story too.

'Whoever serves me must follow me' says Jesus 'and where I am, there will my servant be also'. So, if we are to enter into the full joy of resurrection then we will also have to enter into the full agony of Gethsemane and Golgotha.

We need to find, within that experience some way of relating to the world around us especially at this time of war, division and unrest.

Just as we cannot get to Easter Day except through Good Friday, in our own lives we can't evade the consequences of our words and actions. If we have hurt someone, or have been hurt, we can't always pretend nothing's happened and everything's all right.

Peace and justice can be restored but often only through a painful process of recognising the hurt caused, asking for, offering and accepting forgiveness and then a gradual re-building of trust.

When Jesus commits himself to the road that leads to the cross he commits himself to identifying fully with the pain and suffering of this world. 'It is for this reason I've come to this hour. Father glorify your name'. That's when God's voice is heard saying 'I have glorified my name, and I will glorify it again'.

When we have the courage to confront the reality of suffering in this world and in our own lives, whatever its cause, we may not find the answers but we will find

ourselves face to face with God and hear him say. 'I know what you're going through. That is why I came. In your life I will glorify my name.'

God's glory is in the living, suffering and dying of Jesus but that's not the end of the story. God's glory is in the raising of Jesus to new life, the final triumph of love over death.

But before that new life can be born and bear fruit, the old life, like the grain of wheat, has to die. So, it is with us. We can cling on to our old lives, afraid of what might happen if we say yes to God's invitation to new life. Or we can begin again to let our old lives go as we renew our acceptance and commitment to the new eternal life found in the risen Christ.

This Passiontide let's enter fully into the mystery of the suffering of Jesus so that we can also enter fully in the joy of his resurrection.

## The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
the source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**All This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God,**

**Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**Amen.**



## Prayers of intercession

Let us pray to the Father through his Son  
who suffered on the cross for the world's redemption.  
Fill with your Spirit Christ's broken body, the Church ...  
Give to Christian people everywhere a deep longing  
to take up the cross and to understand its mysterious glory.  
By the Saviour's cross and passion,  
**All Lord, save us and help us.**

Bless those who lead the Church's worship at this solemn time ...  
In the preaching of the word and the celebration of the sacraments  
draw your people close to you.  
By the Saviour's cross and passion,  
**All Lord, save us and help us.**

Strengthen those [among us] who are preparing for baptism,  
together with their teachers, sponsors and families ...  
Teach them what it means to die and rise with Christ  
and prepare them to receive the breath of his Spirit.  
By the Saviour's cross and passion,  
**All Lord, save us and help us.**

Look in your mercy upon the world you loved so much  
that you sent your Son to suffer and to die ...  
Strengthen those who work to share  
the reconciliation won at such a cost upon the cross.  
By the Saviour's cross and passion,  
**All Lord, save us and help us.**

Bring healing by the wounds of Christ  
to all who are weighed down by pain and injustice ...  
Help the lonely and the betrayed, the suffering and the dying,  
to find strength in the companionship of Jesus,  
and in his passion to know their salvation.  
By the Saviour's cross and passion,  
**All Lord, save us and help us.**

Welcome into paradise all who have left this world in your friendship ...

According to your promises,

bring them with all your saints

to share in all the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection.

By the Saviour's cross and passion,

**All Lord, save us and help us.**

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers**

**for the sake of your Son,**

**our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

## The peace

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All And also with you.**

**HYMN 3 Our God is here**

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

## The Dismissal

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,

to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;

and the blessing of God the Almighty:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

be with you now and remain with you always.

**All Amen.**

**HYMN 4 All I once held dear**

**All I once held dear**

[\(please click to hear the hymn\)](#)

[\(different version\)](#)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All In the name of Christ. Amen.**

# The Liturgy of the Sacrament

## Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

**All and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**All We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Father, you made the world and love your creation.  
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.  
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.  
And so we gladly thank you,  
with saints and angels praising you, and saying,

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and as we obey his command,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
that broken bread and wine outpoured  
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends  
and, taking bread, he praised you.  
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.  
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:  
Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,  
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,  
we proclaim his death and resurrection  
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All Christ has died.**  
**Christ is risen.**  
**Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,  
help us to work together for that day  
when your kingdom comes  
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,  
gather us in your loving arms  
and bring us with all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,  
for ever and ever.

**All Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All**     **Our Father in heaven,**  
          **hallowed be your name,**  
          **your kingdom come,**  
          **your will be done,**  
          **on earth as in heaven.**  
          **Give us today our daily bread.**  
          **Forgive us our sins**  
          **as we forgive those who sin against us.**  
          **Lead us not into temptation**  
          **but deliver us from evil.**  
  
          **For the kingdom, the power,**  
          **and the glory are yours**  
          **now and for ever. Amen.**

## Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All**     **Though we are many, we are one body,**  
          **because we all share in one bread.**

**All**     **Lamb of God,**  
          **you take away the sin of the world,**  
          **have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,**  
          **you take away the sin of the world,**  
          **have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,**  
          **you take away the sin of the world,**  
          **grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ  
which he gave for you,  
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts  
by faith with thanksgiving.

**All** We do not presume  
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,  
trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in your manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy  
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.  
But you are the same Lord  
whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ  
and to drink his blood,  
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body  
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him,  
and he in us.  
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

### **Prayer after Communion**

Merciful Lord,  
grant your people grace to withstand the temptations  
of the world, the flesh and the devil,  
and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All** Amen

**All** Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work  
to your praise and glory.  
Amen.