



Last Words of Love

One Licence number: 741603-A

THE GATHERING

Welcome

Today, we stand at the foot of the cross and we hear for ourselves the last words of Jesus. We open ourselves to share in his suffering, his arrest and trial, his torture and death. Through his last words we share in his passion and his redeeming love for our broken world.

Opening Prayer

Jesus, in your cross we see the casual brutality of our world, in your living and in your dying, you meet our violence with your tenderness, our hatred with your pity. Have mercy upon us when our hearts and hopes, our bodies and beliefs, are breaking and give us grace to let go into your embrace.

Jesus, by your cross, save us and help us, we pray

Amen

Opening Responses

In the shadow of our suffering

All Is the suffering of Jesus

In the shadow of our weakness

All Is the vulnerability of the Christ

In the shadow of our pain

All Is the God who cried out

We are never rejected

All we are never abandoned

Reading John 19, 16-24

Hymn **My song is love unknown**

My song is love unknown,
my Saviour's love to me;
love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be.
Oh, who am I, that for my sake
my Lord should take frail flesh and die?

He came from His blest throne
salvation to bestow;
but men made strange, and none
the longed for Christ would know.
But oh, my Friend, my Friend indeed,
who at my need His life did spend!

Sometimes they strew His way,
and His sweet praises sing;
resounding all the day hosannas to their King.
Then "Crucify!" is all their breath,
and for His death they thirst and cry.

They rise, and needs will have
my dear Lord made away.
A murderer they save; the Prince of Life they slay.
Yet cheerful He to suff'ring goes,
that He His foes from thence might free.

Here might I stay and sing—
no story so divine!
Never was love, dear King, never was grief like Thine.
This is my Friend, in whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend.

tune: Love unknown

I - FATHER, FORGIVE THEM

Reading Luke 23, 32-38

Reflection

Silence

What do we find hard to forgive?

Where has our hurting caused us to lash out?

Is there someone we need to reach out to?

After the silence we respond

Be strong, and let your heart take courage

All all you who wait for the Lord

Prayer

Lord Jesus,

You took our very worst and gave your very best.

Help us to recognise our human instincts and drives, to hurt others when we have been hurt.

Help us to walk with you in the way of forgiveness, transforming hurt to hope, noticing beauty and goodness, as we are shaped by your last words of love.

Amen

HYMN There in God's garden stands the tree of wisdom



There in God's garden stands the Tree of wisdom,
whose leaves hold forth the healing of the nations.
Tree of all knowledge, Tree of all compassion,
Tree of all beauty

Its name is Jesus, name that says, 'Our Saviour!'
There on its branches see the scars of suffering:
see where the tendrils of our human selfhood
feed on its life-blood.

Thorns not its own are tangled in its foliage;
our greed has starved it; our despite has choked it.
Yet look, it lives! Its grief has not destroyed it,
nor fire consumed it.

See how its branches reach to us in welcome;
hear what the voice says, 'Come to me, ye weary!
Give me your sickness, give me all your sorrow.
I will give blessing.'

All heaven is singing, "thanks to Christ, whose Passion
offers in mercy healing, strength and pardon.
Peoples and nations, take it, take it freely!
Amen! My Master!

tune: Diva Servatrix

II - TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE

Reading Luke 23, 39-43

Reflection

Silence

What are some of the hard times we have had to face?

Have there been times when we have been isolated and lonely in our suffering?

Have there been times when we have been able to reach out, making connections in truth and generosity from a place of pain?

After the silence we respond

Be strong, and let your heart take courage

All all you who wait for the Lord

Prayer

Lord Jesus

In the hardest times of our lives, help us not to become hardened
In the pressure and stress of life, help us not to react with anger
or aggression. Give us grace to respond with generosity to allow
the memories of love to endure, as we echo your last words of
love.

Amen

CHOIR Ave Verum Corpus

Ave verum corpus, natum ex Maria Virgine,
vere passum, immolatum in cruce pro homine
cuius latus perforatum fluxit aqua et sanguine:
esto nobis prægustatum in mortis examine.

[O Jesu dulcis, O Jesu pie, O Jesu, fili Mariae.
Miserere mei. Amen.]

Hail, true Body, born of the Virgin Mary,
truly suffered, sacrificed on the cross for mankind,
from whose pierced side flowed water and blood:
Be for us a foretaste [of the Heavenly banquet]
in the trial of death!

[O sweet Jesus, O holy Jesus,
O Jesus, son of Mary, have mercy on me. Amen.]

*Settings of music by
William Byrd, Edward Elgar or Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*

III - HERE IS YOUR SON

Reading John 12, 25-27

Reflection

Silence

What are our own memories of loss, grief, aloneness?

Who do we picture within our own circle of friends and family?

How far do we notice and value the established networks of love that anchor our lives?

After the silence we respond

Be strong, and let your heart take courage

All all you who wait for the Lord

Prayer

Lord Jesus

You draw us into new patterns of relationship and care.

You help us to rebuild our broken communities through your generous, inclusive love.

Help us now to open our hearts and our homes to find new ways to belong together, and help us to notice and value our core networks of love, as we are shaped by your last words of love.

Amen

Hymn Mary, blesséd grieving mother

Mary, blesséd grieving mother,
waiting by the cross of shame,
through your patient, prayerful vigil,
kindle hope's eternal flame;
crying in the pains of earth,
singing of redemption's birth.

Where the crosses of the nations
darken still the noonday skies,
see the sad Madonna weeping
through a million mothers' eyes.
Holy Mary, full of grace,
all our tears with yours embrace.

Standing with the suffering Saviour,
still oppressed by hate and fear,
were the gentle still are murdered
and protesters disappear:
mother of the crucified,
call his people to your side!

Holy Mother, watching, waiting,
for the saving of the earth;
in the loneliness of dying,
speak of hope and human worth,
there for all the world to see,
lifted up at Calvary!

tune: Picardy

IV - MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?

Reading Matthew 27, 45-49

Reflection

Silence

What have been the darkest times in our lives?

When have we felt forsaken or abandoned?

Have there been times we feel God has not answered our prayers?

After the silence we respond

Be strong, and let your heart take courage,

All all you who wait for the Lord

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
you share our humanity, you understand our doubts and fears, you know what it is to feel abandoned and alone. Help us to voice our honest feelings, to ask the hardest questions, to plunge deep into silence ready to notice presence and to hear your words of love for us.

Amen

V - I AM THIRSTY

Reading John 19, 28-29

Reflection

Silence

Are we in touch with our own deepest needs?

How easy do we find it to receive?

In our daydreams or dreams , how do we hear the voice of love?

After the silence we respond

Be strong, and let your heart take courage

All all you who wait for the Lord.

Prayer

Gracious God

you know our deepest needs:

help us to hear them too.

Amid the clamouring voices of want and desire, we thirst for you unconditional love, help us to receive you now, and to give space for your love as we dream dreams, through your word of love from the cross.

Amen

Hymn O sacred head

O sacred head, surrounded
by crown of piercing thorn!
O bleeding head, so wounded,
shamed and put to scorn!
Death's pallid hue comes o'er thee,
the glow of life decays;
yet angel-hosts adore thee,
and tremble as they gaze.

The comeliness and vigour
is withered up and gone,
and in thy wasted figure
I see death drawing on.
O agony and during!
O love to sinners free!
Jesu, all grace supplying,
turn thou thy face on me.

In this thy bitter passion,
good Shepherd, think on me
with thy most sweet compassion,
unworthy though I be:
beneath thy cross abiding
for ever would I rest,
in thy dear love confiding,
and with thy presence blest.

tune: Passion Chorale

VI - IT IS FINISHED

Reading John 19, 30

Reflection

Silence

What do we feel about death, our own sense of mortality?

What do we feel have been our own accomplishments?

When are we most able to tune in to the still small voice of God's love?

After the silence we respond

Be strong, and let your heart take courage,

All all you who wait for the Lord.

Prayer

Gracious God

accomplish in us your purposes, complete in us your work of healing love, that though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we may hear your words of love, and find you, one step ahead of us, recognising your still small voice leading us home.

Amen

CHOIR God so loved the world

God so loved the world that he gave
his only-begotten son
that whosoever believeth in him
should not perish
but have everlasting life.

[For God sent not his son
into the world to condemn the world,
but that the world through him might be saved.]

*Setting of music by
Bob Chilcott, John Goss or John Stainer*

VII - FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS

Reading Luke 23, 44-49

Reflection

Silence

What will we be remembered for?

Have we walked the talk of our faith?

Can we let go of all else but love?

After the silence we respond

Be strong, and let your heart take courage

All all you who wait for the Lord

Prayer

Lord Jesus,

We bring to you our deepest selves, we thank you that we are spiritual people, children of God, made in God's image and likeness. In our living and in our dying, give us grace to grow into our true selves, and to let go of all that is not love, recognising that we are part of an endless and unbreakable network of souls as we make your words of love our prayer.

Amen

Hymn When I survey the wondrous cross

When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the cross of Christ my God;
all the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his heads, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down:
did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were an offering far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

tune: Rockingham

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Reading John 19, 31-42

Prayer

Gracious God,
your hands now bear the wounds,
your heart now holds the agony, of that appalling cross.
Hold us in your everlasting arms as we face the little deaths of
daily life and the great mystery of our own mortality. May we find
you there beside us, light in our darkest night.

Amen

You took our worst:
All you gave your best.

You took our hate:
All you gave your love.

You took that cross:
All you changed everything.

We adore you, O Christ,
All and we bless you.

Hymn Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;
where you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble;
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

tune: Were you there

Please leave the church in silence.

The Reserved Sacrament is available in the
Formby Chapel for those who would like to receive.

