

# ST. TIMOTHY

## ANGLICAN CHURCH

A Welcoming Christian Community in North Burnaby  
Good Friday Tenebrae Service - 8:00 pm, April 03, 2015



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# Jesus's Seven Last Words from the Cross

## A Service of Thanksgiving for the Unfolding New Creation

Instrumental Prelude

~ *Silence* ~

O crucified Jesus, Son of the Father, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, eternal Word of God,

**We worship you.**

O crucified Jesus, holy temple of God, dwelling place of the Most High, gate of heaven, burning flame of love,

**We worship you.**

O crucified Jesus, sanctuary of justice and love, full of kindness, source of all faithfulness,

**We worship you.**

O crucified Jesus, ruler of every heart, in you are the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, in you dwells all the fullness of the Godhead,

**We worship you.**

Jesus, Lamb of God,

**Have mercy on us.**

Jesus, bearer of our sins,

**We worship you.**

Jesus, redeemer of the world,

**Grant us peace.**<sup>1</sup>

Christ Saviour, Son of the Father, grant us peace.

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<sup>1</sup> Book of Common Worship, quoted in *A Triduum Source Book I*, Liturgy Training Publications

## The First Word

*“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34 NRSV)*

*~ The first candle is extinguished. ~*

**We are glad that this is the first word from the cross because we could take no other. It is painful enough; let us begin with some comfort, even if incomprehensible.**

“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing,” suggests that there is forgiveness for us. For us who have come to the cross this Good Friday to worship the God whose love and peace surpass our understanding. We see on the cross not our own sinfulness. With the eyes of faith, we see the inner life of the Triune God made visible on the cross.

**Jesus, we stand before your cross with our eyes and mouths wide open. We pray that the forgiveness worked and granted us, we not keep to ourselves, revelling in our own sinfulness. We pray that we remember your words and that your forgiveness may transform us and our whole lives into forgiveness for the world.**

*~ Silence ~*

**Hymn: “What Wondrous Love is This?”**

**CP # 400**

## The Second Word

*One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”*

*(Luke 23:39-43 NRSV)*

*~ The second candle is extinguished. ~*

Seven words are not much. We wish you had said more. We can’t stand the silence. What does it mean that they were criminals? Was the one mocking you because a king and saviour ended up on the cross? Why did the other criminal seem to understand?

**Lord, we ask the same, “Jesus remember me.” We want to be remembered.**

We worry that we may disappear without a trace and no-one will remember us. That is why we try so hard to be somebody. And yet this thief does not say, ‘Jesus, remember me so that my personal life may have significance.’ In the midst of death this thief recognizes you as the one to redeem Israel: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

**Lord, we wish that together with this criminal you grant us the gift of remembering so that we may be restored and rejoined to the family of God. Jesus, to be with you, to be claimed by you, is to be your friend – it is paradise.**

Jesus, you *are* the kingdom of God. In our salvation you make us your body, your enfleshed memory. Like the thief we understand that the only remembering that matters is to be remembered by you. That gives us hope and confidence.

*~ Silence ~*

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

The first system of the musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both staves are in the key of B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. The melody is written in the treble staff, and the accompaniment is in the bass staff. The lyrics are written below the treble staff.

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

The second system of the musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both staves are in the key of B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. The melody is written in the treble staff, and the accompaniment is in the bass staff. The lyrics are written below the treble staff.

## The Third Word

*When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.”*  
(John 19:26-27 NRSV)

~ *The third candle is extinguished.* ~

At first glance we see you as a caring and loving son even in the agony of your death. We see you as we feel all children should be.

**Yet, you o Lord, were not family-friendly. When you were told that your mother and brothers are outside, asking for you, you replied:**

***“Who are my mother and my brothers?... Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”***  
(Mark 3:33, 35 NRSV)

What is going on here under the cross is much more than a son caring for his mother. Rather, Mary is not just another mother. She is the first-born of your new creation. Without Mary’s response of “Here am I” to Gabriel, our salvation would not be. We remember Mary’s song:

*“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”*  
(Luke 1:46-55 NRSV)

Now your mother stands under the cross, seeing her son die and she remembers her hopes. No one has been more tested than she. Mary is the mother of your beloved disciple because of her faith. Hoping against hope she has not abandoned her hope, the hope of Israel. You, her son, the Messiah of Israel, you are dying on the cross, yet Mary is still expecting the powerful to be brought down from their thrones, and the lowly to be lifted up; the hungry to be filled with good things, and the rich sent away empty, your servant Israel be helped, in remembrance of your mercy. Can she see how it is going to happen? How does she understand that this is not the end?

Somehow, under the cross your mother Mary holds on to the promise given her by the angel. In that she is not only the mother of the beloved disciple but also the mother of the church, our mother, my mother.

~ Silence ~

818 TELL OUT, MY SOUL, THE GREATNESS OF THE LORD



1. Tell out, my soul, the great - ness of the Lord!
2. Tell out, my soul, the great - ness of his name!
3. Tell out, my soul, the great - ness of his might!
4. Tell out, my soul, the glo - ries of his word!



Un - num - bered bless - ings give my spir - it voice;  
 Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;  
 Pow'rs and do - min - ions lay their glo - ry by;  
 Firm is his prom - ise, and his mer - cy sure.



Ten - der to me the prom - ise of his word;  
 His mer - cy sure, from age to age the same;  
 Proud hearts and stub - born wills are put to flight,  
 Tell out, my soul, the great - ness of the Lord



In God my Sav - ior shall my heart re - joice.  
 His ho - ly name—the Lord, the might - y One.  
 The hun - gry fed, the hum - ble lift - ed high.  
 To chil - dren's chil - dren and for ev - er more!

Text: Luke 1:46-55; *Magnificat anima mea*; Timothy Dudley-Smith, b. 1926, © 1962, Hope Publishing Co.  
 Tune: WOODLANDS, 10 10 10 10; Walter Greatorex, 1877-1949, © Oxford University Press

## The Fourth Word

*From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* (Matthew 27:45-46 NRSV)

*~ The fourth candle is extinguished. ~*

Jesus, these words we really don't understand. Give us more to chew, to process, to think about. How can you, the second person of the Trinity, God's only Son, be forsaken by God?

**We are people who have been told that there is an explanation for almost everything. And now we find ourselves speechless. We do not understand.**

And yet, we all know the valleys of life. We all know suffering for which there is no answer that could satisfy.

**We are speechless but in the midst of not understanding – we understand. Not with words, but with an understanding deeper than words.**

Jesus, you prayed the Psalms. The Psalms give not only expression to us but they give our life shape and form. Your cry is the exemplification of the love that is the very life of God. It is the love that was in you. It is the love we cannot comprehend but only receive.

*Christ, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.* (Philippians 2 NRSV)

Jesus, when we see you on the cross we see no anomaly. When we see your cross we see what God always was and what God always is.

**Your cross is not God becoming something other than God. Your cross is what God always was, is and will be: complete self-emptying made possible by perfect love. You refuse to let our sin determine our relationship to you.**

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" shatters all our attempts to understand you on our terms. In your suffering on the cross we see the glory of God.

*“Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*  
(Philippians 2 NRSV)

~ Silence ~

**Hymn: “At the Name of Jesus”**

**CP # 375**

## The Fifth Word

*After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), “I am thirsty.”*  
(John 19:28 NRSV)

~ *The fifth candle is extinguished.* ~

What does it mean that the one who can give living water thirsts? Jesus, are you not God? Are you not the one who came into the world, the one who was before the beginning of the world, and the one through whom everything came into being?

**Your thirst seems so human that it can make us feel uncomfortable. It is true, we would prefer a God who would not save by a cross. Your thirst seems too human to us. And yet, you are God. You are the bread of life, the light of the world, the good shepherd, the resurrection and the life, the true vine. But how can you be thirsty?**

That you can thirst means that you can die. It means that your suffering and death was not pretend, it was real. You drink the cup of death. That is how much you love the world. Your thirst takes us into your mystery: wholly human, and wholly God. Not 50% of this and 50% of that. You are fully committed to your humanity, and you are fully divine.

**We too are thirsty. You created us to thirst for you (Psalm 42) in a dry and weary land where there is no water (Psalm 63). Our thirst for you is as real as our thirst for water.**

Jesus, you are thirsty, and yet you say to us:

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink.”  
(John 7:37b-38a)

**In the waters of baptism you have drawn us into the mystery of your salvation. You have made us your body for the world.**



In the communion of your body and blood we become reminders that you have not abandoned us. You commission us. To all who thirst your kingdom will be present through our ministry in your name.

~ Silence ~

**Hymn: “O Healing River”**

**CP # 578**

### The Sixth Word

*When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30 NRSV)*

~ *The sixth candle is extinguished* ~

What is finished? Is it the dying that is finished? The suffering?

**Your cry, ‘It is finished’, is a cry of triumph and victory. What you came to do you have done. All is accomplished.**

Through you all things came into being. Now you have made all things new. Creation is fulfilled and consummated in you, O Lord Jesus. Your kingdom has come, and there is a new way of life for those who worship and follow you.

It is finished but it is not over. Your salvation is unfolding: On the cross we see the movement of your unrelenting love for your creation. It is finished and yet continues to unfold.

**It is finished. But it is not over. God, you have finished what only you could finish. Your sacrifice exceeds every debt. Our sins have been consumed, making possible lives that glow with the beauty of your Spirit.**

It is finished. But it is not over. You made us the church, you made us the ‘not over’. You made us witnesses to the world that the world too can be made new. We now can live at peace, as agents of your reconciliation. Not because we have all the answers to the world’s troubles, but because we have you.

~ Silence ~

**Hymn: “God of the Sparrow”**

**CP # 414**

## The Seventh Word

Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Having said this, he breathed his last. (Luke 23:46 NRSV)

*~ The seventh candle is extinguished. ~*

You began on the cross praying to the Father. As death draws near you again pray as only you can.

**We find comfort in your words. We think of *our* last hour. We think of others before us who have prayed these words in their death. We want to pray these words too, now and always. But we can pray them only because you prayed them first. All our prayer is an imitation of your prayer.**

When you prayed these words commending yourself to the Father you freely underwent the dark night of death. Because you did this for us we don't have to. Because you did this for us, we can commend our spirit, our life, and all we are into the hands of the Father.

Jesus, our Saviour and our friend, you chose death so that we might live. You are on your way to the darkness of Holy Saturday. But even darkness is not dark to you. You go to those who dwell in isolation from themselves, from each other, and from you. You are the Word who alone can make communication possible between those who can speak but not hear.

**Jesus, your death had no precedent, but your salvation was anticipated and longed for. Willingly, you became for us our prayer. You are our intercessor, you are our friend, you are our salvation.**

That we pray with you at this hour and at every hour, commending our spirit, our life, and all that we are into your hands, is possible because your promise to a criminal is also your promise to us; it is possible because Mary said “Here am I”; it is possible because you fully and willingly shared our existence, accepting even the judgement our sins required.

**In faith you draw us into your death and resurrection. We were baptized into your death that we may rise with you.**

You invite us to come, to draw near, to live without fear, and to behold the mystery and the wonder of your cross.

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+ *the offering is received at the sanctuary doors* +  
+ *today we leave in silence* +

Acknowledgements:

This service is inspired by *Cross-Shattered Christ*, Stanley Hauerwas,  
Grand Rapids, MI [Brazos Press 2004] and written by the Rev. Christoff Reiner.

It was first used by **Peace Lutheran Church**  
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**All are welcome to come & join us for Easter Sunday Services:**

**Sunday    April 05<sup>th</sup>    @ 8:00 am – Sunrise Baptism Service**  
**@ 9:00 am – Easter Breakfast & Egg Hunt**  
**@ 10:00 am – Resurrection Eucharist**