

APPROACHING THE CROSS

“Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money. He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present. Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover." "Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked. He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there." They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.” (Lu 22:1-13 NIV)

(NO READING ONE FROM PHOTOCOPIES – BELOW IS READING 1)

The Bread I Break
Dylan Thomas

This bread I break was once the oat
This wine upon a foreign tree
Plunged in its fruit
Man in the day or wind at night
Laid the crops low, broke the grape's joy

Once in this wine the summer blood
Knocked in the flesh that decked the vine
Once in this bread
The oat was merry in the wind
Man broke the sun, pulled the wind down

This flesh you break, this blood you let
Make desolation in the vein
Were oat and grape
Born of the sensual root and sap
My wine you drink, my bread you snap.

The Last Supper

The hour was late
His time was near
Emmanuel would be a sacrifice dear

Lamb for the Passover
All the disciples partake

Soon a new covenant
The Savior would make

Setting the table in the
Upper room for the feast
Prepared in advance His last
Passover meal; He broke bread without yeast
E'er you eat the bread and drink the wine
Remember Him, who for you became least

SILENCE

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfilment in the kingdom of God." After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him." (Lu 22:12-22 NIV)

READING 2 (P24 It could have been me)

"You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the cock crows today, you will deny three times that you know me." Then Jesus asked them, "When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?" "Nothing," they answered. He said to them, "But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfilment." The disciples said, "See, Lord, here are two swords." "That is enough," he replied. Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation." (Lu 22:28-46 NIV)

Crystal beads of sweat
It's the beginning of a flood
Their translucence reveals an anguish
That is growing underneath

Causing them to swell
A great heaviness pulls
There is no resistance
They start a lowly journey
Moved in surrender to greater will
As the purest heart crumbles
One drop follows after another
Forming glistening streaks
Along a spotless brow
The tender heart soon shatters
Under the weight of woe
Drops fall to the ground
Like glistening shards of crystal
Where the beads first surfaced
A single crimson drop forms
It slowly paints a stripe
Down that stainless skin
It rolled along the hairline
Over the cheekbone to the jaw
In a moment of uncertainty
It clung there at the edge
With no alternative to release
The final hold was given up
Like a rose petal it fluttered down
Gently landing in dampened earth
Where sweat and tears first fell
At this silent touch of crimson
Broken crystal drops transformed
Color slowly deepening
Dirt glittering with garnets
Each hearts' filth was covered
But their purity had this stain

READING 3 (p14 God forsaken)

READING 4 (p 36 Another garden)

SILENCE

“While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” When Jesus’ followers saw what was going to happen, they said, “Lord, should we strike with our swords?” And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus answered, “No more of this!” And he touched the man’s ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns.”” (Lu 22:47-53 NIV)

READING 5 (p49 We put him on the cross)

Judas, if true love never ceases
how could you, my friend, have come to this:
To sell me for thirty silver pieces
and betray me with a kiss?
Judas, remember what I taught you,
do not despair while hanging on the rope.
It's because you sinned that I have sought you;
I came to give you hope.
Judas, let us pray and hang together,
you on your halter, I upon my hill.
Dear friend, even if you loved me never,
you know I love you still.

The Betrayal

by Janet Martin © 2009

The birds in the trees were silent,
The flowers closed their eyes,
The trees bent low in sorrow
As they heard their Master's cries
The moon in the sky was darkened,
The wind had ceased to blow,
For there within the garden
All nature seemed to know....and they seemed to cry,

Daily You walked in our splendor,
Daily we hailed You as King!
Our Master, our Creator,
Maker of everything,
Lord of all creation,
Let nothing halt our song,
But now we bow in sorrow
For our Maker's hour is come, Yes, our Maker's hour is come.

The disciples lay a-sleeping,
Subdued in slumbers bliss,
No silent tears or weeping
In this prelude to The Kiss,
Then lo, what breaks the silence?
What is that doleful beat?
The song of doom and violence
Shod upon their feet!

Then Jesus spoke, "Arise, arise,
Behold, he is at hand!
The one who will betray me
Before us now doth stand!"
Judas cried, "Hail Master!"

And kissed the Son of Man,
Then Jesus turned to Judas,
And Jesus called him "Friend." and then He said,

"Daily I sat in your temple,
Daily you heard my words,
And yet you bring an army
To betray the Lord of lords?
Daily you heard my teaching,
Do you not know who I am?
And yet you bring your swords and knives
With which to slay a Lamb?
.....and yet you bring your swords and knives
To betray the Son of Man!"

SILENCE

“Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him." But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." "Man, I am not!" Peter replied. About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean." Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the cock crows today, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.” (Lu 22:54-62 NIV)

When noble Peter, who had sworn
that midst a thousand spears and a thousand swords
he would die beside his beloved Lord,
realized that, overcome by cowardice,
his faith had failed him in his great moment of need,
the shame, sorrow and pity
for his own failure and for Christ's suffering
pierced his breast with a thousand darts.

But the bows which hurled
the sharpest and most deadly arrows
into his breast were the Lord's eyes, as they looked at him;

It looked as if his Lord, surrounded by many
enemies and abandoned by his peers, wanted to say:
"What I foretold him has now come to pass,
disloyal friend, proud disciple"

"More cruel", He seemed to say, "are your eyes
than the godless hands that will put me on the cross;
nor have I felt a blow that struck me as hard,

among the many that did strike me,
as the one that came out of your mouth.

I found no one faithful, nor kind,
among the many that I deemed worthy to be called mine:
but you, for whom my love was so intense,
are more deceitful and ungrateful above all the others.
Each of them offended me only by leaving me:
but you denied me"

The words full of anger and love
that Peter seemed to see written
on the serene, holy eyes of Christ,
would shatter whoever who heard them.

Like a snowbank which, having lain frozen
and hidden in the depth of the valley all winter,
and then in springtime, warmed by the sun,
falls apart and melts into streams,
such was the fear which had lain like ice
in Peter's heart and made him repress the truth;
when Christ turned His eyes on him,
it melted and was changed into tears.

And his crying was not a small spring
or mountain stream, which dries in the warm seasons;
for although the king of Heaven forgave him
immediately for his disgraceful deception,
not a single night in his remaining life passed
without the cock's crow waking him up
and reminding him how shamefully he behaved,
and inciting new tears for the ancient betrayal.

Realizing that he felt much different
than before, and unable to bear to remain
in the presence of the scorned Lord,
who loved him so, he didn't wait to see
if the harsh tribunal would hand down
a severe or clement sentence, but,
leaving the despicable place where he was,
bitterly crying, he returned outside.

By denying my Lord, I denied
life itself from which every spirit springs:
a tranquil life that neither fears nor desires,
whose course flows on without end:
because then I denied the one true life,
there is no reason, none at all, to continue this false life.

Go then, vain life, quickly leave me:
since I denied true life, I do not want its shadow."

SILENCE

"The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophesy! Who hit you?" And they said many other insulting things to him. At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. "If you are the Christ," they said, "tell us." Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied, "You are right in saying I am." Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips." Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate." (Lu 22:63-23:1 NIV)

"Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?" "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." "But we have no right to execute anyone," the Jews objected. This happened so that the words Jesus had spoken indicating the kind of death he was going to die would be fulfilled. Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?" Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place." "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." "What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him. But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?" They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in a rebellion." (Joh 18:28-40 NIV)

READING 6 (p44 Barnabas the brigand)

SILENCE

"Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck him in the face. Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him." The Jews insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. "Do you refuse to speak to

me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realise I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus." (Joh 19:1-16 NIV)

What happened to that crown of thorns that pierced His blessed head,
The one we should have worn but one He chose to wear instead?
That crown whose thorns still carried stains of royal blood so rare
That DNA can't match it; there's no sample to compare.

I'd like to think when God looked down upon His suffering Son
And wiped His ageless eyes in sadness at what man had done,
That God retrieved that blood-soaked crown and held it to His breast
So soldiers couldn't hold it up, make fun of it in jest.

Perhaps God placed that crown of thorns in Heaven's Trophy Case,
Reserved for things from martyrs who had known God's special grace,
For Jesus was a martyr, too, the greatest One of all,
For laying down His life in answer to His Father's call.

Some glorious day, all kings and queens will stand before the throne
From all the ages they'll be there, the famous, the unknown.
They'll look upon the Son of God who sits in Mercy's Seat,
Then bending on their knees, they'll place their crowns at Jesus' feet.

The faithful come before Him, those who worshipped Him on earth,
All saints since the Creation, all believers since His birth.
And there before the Master, stripped of meaningless façade,
They lay their crowns before Him, this beloved Son of God.

God strides to Heaven's Trophy Case, removes the crown of thorns,
The one that Jesus wore when He endured those scoffs and scorns.
God lifts it high for all to see; as shouting fills the air,
The wood turns into diamonds, all the thorns to rubies rare.

The saints explode in worship, as the mighty choir sings,
"Hail, hail, our blessed Saviour, Lord of Lords and King of Kings,
You're worthy, blessed Jesus, and it's You whom we adore.
All heaven bows before You, You shall reign forevermore!"

“As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the

wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ Then “‘they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills "Cover us!"’ For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?” Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One." The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.” (Lu 23:26-38 NIV)

READING 7 (p33 Bound upon the accursed tree)

SILENCE

“One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

READING 8 (p32 Lord when thy kingdom comes)

It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man." When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.” (Lu 23:39-49 NIV)

READING 9 (p35 Let me dwell on Golgotha)

SILENCE

“Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by

Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no-one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was near by, they laid Jesus there." (Joh 19:31-42 NIV)

READING 10 (p2 Joseph of Arimathea)

READING 11 (p3 The powerlessness of Christ on the cross)

READING 12 (p19 Oh come and mourn with me awhile)

We must do something about the cross
and there are only two things we can do
embrace it or die upon it
We must embrace the cross and Christ crucified for us

Let's conclude our vigil with a hymn
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 death of Christ, my God
All the vain things that charm me most
I sacrifice them through his blood

See from his head 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