

## **Meditation on the Wounds of Jesus**

### **Introduction**

**With the help of a picture of the crucifixion scene, a crucifix or the scene pictured in your imagination, come before Jesus on the Cross and gaze upon him as he hangs there. Allow your gaze to meet his and call to mind that all he endured was you and me personally. He endured the Cross for each of us because of an intense love he has always had for us from all eternity. This will be a deeply personal and intimate prayer time, unique for each one of us. Take a moment to ask Christ for the desire to know that you are completely loved by him so that you might then grow in your love for him.**

**As we begin, close your eyes as before. Become aware of your breathing and gift of life that is yours with every breath you take. As you inhale give thanks to God for your life and as you exhale name anything that is a concern or worry that could distract you during this prayer time. And now place in God's care until after this prayer time.**

**Listen now to the words of the prophet Isaiah who foretold the coming of the messiah , one who would suffer for God's people and free them from sin.....Is 53**

***'Without beauty, without majesty, we saw him, no looks to attract our eyes, a thing despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering, a man to make people screen their faces, he was despised and we took no account of him. And yet ours were the sufferings he bore, ours the sorrows he carried. He was pierced through for our faults, crushed for our sins. On him lies a punishment that brings us peace, and through his wounds we are healed.'***

**Jesus is the man of sorrows who came to suffer and die for us, so that through his wounds we would be healed – healed in our relationship with God – healed so that we might be free from sin and death so that we could live by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Look now at your crucifix or the image you have of Jesus upon the cross in your own mind. As you gaze upon him notice the wounds he bore for you and me. Meditating on the wounds of Jesus helps us to focus on the humanity of Jesus, even though we believe him to be God, the second person of the Trinity.

Let us pray,

Most merciful God,

By your Spirit you strengthened your Son Jesus

So that he was able to endure his passion and suffer for us.

Send your Spirit now, so that we may be strengthened

to look upon him whom we have pierced,

To receive the gift of his merciful love and to offer ourselves in service of our neighbour . Amen

Eternal Father, in the cross of Jesus we see the cost of our sin and the depth of your love:

In humble hope and fear may we place at his feet all that we have and all that we are,

Through Christ our Lord. Amen

## **His Hands** -Reading – John 18: 10-12

*'Simon Peter, who carried a sword, drew it and wounded the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword back in its scabbard; am I not to drink the cup that the Father gives me?' The cohort and its captain and the Jewish guards seized Jesus and bound him.'*

Look now at the wounded hands of Jesus.- Recall times in the gospel when Jesus had used his hands – times when he used his hands to touch the eyes of the blind man – times when he touched the skin of the lepers – with his

hands he broke bread to feed the hungry. At the last supper he washed the feet of his disciples. Ponder for a moment the loving compassion that moved Jesus to reach out and touch people.....

Jesus was always using his hands to do good and show love. These are the same hands that the soldiers bound up with rope when they arrested Jesus. With these same hands Jesus felt the rough wood of the cross he had to carry – the hands that would later feel the excruciating pain caused by nails driven into his wrists.

What do you notice as you gaze up at the hands of Jesus ?– these hands that expressed so much warmth and love to others – hands that are no longer free to reach out and hold the people he wanted to serve and care for.

What are you feeling right now..... towards Jesus? – towards those who nailed him to the cross? – Ask the Holy Spirit to help you express what you want to say to Jesus on the cross.....take time in the silence to speak to him.....

Remember now some special moments when you felt the hand of God touch your life – a baptism you attended, your confirmation, receiving Holy Communion - a prayer that was answered in a way that surprised you – you were in trouble and someone helped you through that difficult time, maybe a time when you were grieving the loss of someone you love – a time when you found the courage to forgive, or ask for forgiveness – Now give thanks to God for reaching out to you at key moments in your life.

**Let us pray, 'I adore you O Christ and I praise you because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.'**

## **His Head** John 19:1-3

***' Pilate then had Jesus taken away and scourged, and after this, the soldiers twisted some thorns into a crown and put it on his head and dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, and saying, 'Hail King of the Jews!; and they slapped him in the face.'***

In ancient times, when a king was chosen to lead God's people, his head would be anointed with oil. It was a sign of respect for the person chosen to be king. It was also a sign of consecration, because the king had been set apart for a special role or mission to lead and care for God's people. The anointing of the head is also a sacred gesture in the life of the Church, especially at the time of baptism or confirmation. The head of the child or adult is anointed with the oil of chrism – a sign that the holy Spirit has come down upon that person who has been chosen for a special mission in the life of our church – to witness to the love of Christ in all he or she says and does. Jesus was anointed by the Spirit at his baptism in the river Jordan when the Spirit came down upon his head. In the gospel of Matthew we have the woman who approached Jesus when he was visiting in the home of Simon the Leper, and poured costly ointment over his head out of respect and love for Jesus.

But here on Calvary we see something very different. The head of Jesus is being tortured. He is being mocked and his kingship is being laughed at. He is indeed a king but not of this world. His kingship is revealed in laying down his life for us – loving us to the end – giving everything – holding nothing back.

What do you notice here as you watch? What do you hear? What is your own reaction to what you see happening? Now gaze upon his head bruised and battered, crowned with thorns out of love for me and you. What are you feeling? In the silence be with Jesus – ask him to allow his love to touch you and move you in your heart to adore him –

Let us pray

**'I adore you O Christ and I praise you because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.'**

## **His Feet - John 19: 17- 19**

*'The soldiers took charge of Jesus and carrying his own cross he went out of the city to the place of the skull or , as it was called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified him with two others, one on either side with Jesus in the middle.'*

Most of the time Jesus walked from village to village. So often Jesus walked the extra mile just to be with people who needed hope and healing. Travelling on foot must have been tiring and at the end of each day I am sure Jesus looked forward to placing his aching feet in a cool stream of water. Consider for a moment the love that moved Jesus to walk so far to serve the people he met along the way. In every situation, Jesus was always walking towards people.

Now he is walking towards the Cross. Imagine how vulnerable Jesus must have felt as he walked over the sharp stony ground on his way to Calvary – soon his feet would be held down and pierced by the nails that held him to the cross. What are you feeling right now as you consider the wounded feet of Jesus? What do you wish to say to him?

Consider for a moment that Jesus never walked away from anyone. Now ask to be forgiven for any time you walked away from someone, e.g. a time when you walked by a homeless person begging on the street or a time when you crossed the street to avoid a neighbour, or a relative. Ask forgiveness for times when you did not choose to walk each day in the company of Jesus or times when you decided not to walk the extra mile to help someone in distress or trouble. 'Lord Jesus, son of the Living God, have mercy on me a sinner.' Take a moment give thanks to Jesus for walking with you on the journey of life.

Let us pray

*I adore you O Christ, and I praise you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.'*

## **His Side – Jn 19:31-34**

*'It was preparation day, and to prevent the bodies remaining on the cross during the Sabbath, the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken away. Consequently, the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus and then the other. When they came to Jesus, they found that he was already dead and so instead of breaking his legs , one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance, and immediately there came out blood and water.'*

Jesus was always giving of himself in the service of others. He never held back. Here in this gospel scene we are reminded, that even in death he kept on giving – until the last drops of blood and water poured out from the open wound in his side. We often think of blood as a sign of death, but in the scriptures it is a symbol of life. Jesus came as he said so that we might have life and have it to the full. For him it meant being ready to shed his blood for us – in other words he was ready to give his life for us so that we would have life – eternal life with him.

As we gaze upon the blood dripping from his side, we are also reminded that Jesus is the innocent lamb sacrificed for the forgiveness of our sins. Take a moment to give thanks for the mercy of God revealed in the offering of Jesus on the Cross for you.....

We are also told that water flowed from the side of Jesus on the cross. Water is the symbol of purification, a new beginning in the life of the Holy Spirit. It reminds us of our baptism in the spirit of Christ who has united us to himself as members of his Church. Again as we gaze upon his wounded side, we give thanks to Christ for choosing each one of us to be reborn into eternal life through our baptism. In the silence adore Christ who loved you to the end.

*Let us pray – 'I adore you O Christ and I praise you because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.'*

## **Closing Prayer – Anima Christi**

**Soul of Christ sanctify me**

**Body of Christ save me**

**Blood of Christ inebriate me**

**Water from the side of Christ wash me**

**Passion of Christ strengthen me**

**O Good Jesus hear me**

**Within your wounds hide me**

**Let me never be separated from you**

**From the malignant enemy defend me**

**At the hour of my death, call me**

**And bid me come to you**

**That with your saints I may**

**Praise you forever and ever. Amen**