Good Friday

We begin in silent prayer holding our fears and anxieties for ourselves and for our world before God. God who in and through Jesus is in solidarity with all suffering and troubles throughout time.

Hymn Praise to the Holiest in the height, and in the depth be praise,
in all his words most wonderful, most sure in all his ways.

Reading Mark 15. 1-15

Pilate asked what crime Jesus had committed. It was a good question.
Jesus has annoyed the religious leaders, of that there is no doubt.
He has been critical of the social and religious structures.
He has healed the villagers; told stories to the crowds;
he is a threat to public law and order but is this enough to condemn him, to end his life? But he will not defend himself – the story-teller is silent now and the crowd is noisy..... and Pilate hands him over to be crucified.

Hymn O loving wisdom of our God! When all was sin and shame,
a second Adam to the fight, and to the rescue came.

Reading Mark 15. 16 -20

Soldiers taking the chance for a bit of fun. They have a heavy day ahead.
Soon they would put on their public face - disciplined, controlled efficient.
But for now a bit of a lark with the lads with no risk of recrimination.
Dead men tell no stories and Jesus is going to his death.

Hymn O wisest love! that flesh and blood, which did in Adam fail,
should strive afresh against the foe, should strive and should prevail.

Reading Luke 2. 22,25, 34-35.

She is going to be there at his end - she who had been there from the beginning.
She is his mother. She has fed him and cradled him and watched over his growing.
Whatever he has said and done, he is still her son and she will not desert him now.
Whatever pain of his she could embrace she will. And in the meeting of their eyes there is love, suffering and shining.

Hymn And that a higher gift than grace should flesh and blood refine,
God's presence and his very self, and essence all divine.

Reading Mark 15. 21

Simon from Cyrene, you help Jesus, you give him your strength in the streets of Jerusalem. Willing or unwilling, you, Simon, become part of his story, and he part of yours, for you help him when he needs you. Would we, indeed, do we?

Reading Mark 15. 22-32

Stripped now - of clothing, of disciples, of friends. Alone, naked and vulnerable, with nothing to protect him from the pain and degradation.

Hymn And in the garden secretly, and on the cross on high,
should teach his brethren, and inspire to suffer and to die.

Reading Mark 15. 33-39

Silence

Jesus is dead. His body taken and laid in a tomb dug out of solid rock. A large stone is rolled across the entrance. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses see where his body has been placed. The door is shut now, and the world sighs and waits. And we wait in the darkness, longing for the morning, longing for the light.

Hymn Praise to the Holiest in the height, and in the depths be praise;
in all his words most wonderful, most sure in all his ways.

Collect Christ our victim, whose beauty was disfigured and whose body torn upon the cross; open wide your arms to embrace our tortured world,
that we may not turn away our eyes but abandon ourselves to you. Amen