



Welcome to *Three Takes on the Cross*

This year in our Good Friday 'service' we seek to locate Jesus' passion locally. Three members of St. Michael's – Mark Edgecombe, Maamari Stephens and Matt Bartlett – think aloud about the cross in our place and time. They will be considering, in turn, forgiveness, reconciliation and redemption.

Throughout, the cross is at the centre of our attention, empty because Jesus has risen.

Here is how it works...

- On the hour – beginning at noon, then 1pm, 2pm and just before 3pm – a bell is tolled.
- After this a portion of the John's Gospel is read – chapters 18 and 19, Jesus' betrayal, 'trial', crucifixion and burial. If you want, you can follow the readings from the pew bible at the end of each row. Chapter 18 is marked with a cross.
- Take some time to be quiet after the reading. Let your week go!
- After a few minutes, one of the speakers will give their address, following which...
- You are invited to approach the cross and **take one of the handouts** to use as a basis of reflection. These are:

- A copy of the address just given.
- Some background reading – a poem and newspaper ‘clippings’ relating to Mark’s talk and some theological articles as background to Maamari’s and Matt’s talks.

The excerpt from Rowan William’s *Tokens of Trust* is less a commentary on the passion story so much as an interpretation of Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection.

The chapter from Laura Yordy’s, *Green Witness: Ecology Ethics and the Kingdom of God* argues that ‘bearing witness’ is at core of discipleship and that this encompasses God’s concern to redeem the creation. Yordy uses specialist language in places but, like William’s chapter, perseverance brings rewards – read the marked up headings if nothing else.

Feel free to take a copy of each handout home (including talks you missed), if you think you will find it helpful. Don’t feel you should read everything.

- Take some time to prepare yourself before you read. **Ask God to speak to you. Pray** as you read. Stop often. Re-read bits you find difficult or meaningful. Go back to the scripture if you like to. Again, don’t rush your reading. There is no compulsion to “finish”.
- When you have had enough, feel free to go (ideally not during the talks!). Take some more time to pray before you do. Give thank Christ for his work on the cross. Say the collect below or the Lord’s prayer if you find that helps.

Easter blessings.

*Gracious and merciful God,
for my sake your Son became a human being
and suffered death upon the cross;
purify my heart
and grant me that same passion
in your service;
through this same Jesus Christ,
my saviour, reconciler and redeemer.
Amen.*