

GUIDE TO GOOD FRIDAY 2024



By Rev. Kirk Sexton

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WHY REQUIEM?

Welcome to our Guide for this year's Good Friday service, a solemn and reflective time as we commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Friday, we will gather to delve into the depths of sorrow, contemplating the sacrifice made for our redemption. In this sacred space, we are drawn to the hauntingly beautiful strains of Mozart's Requiem, a masterpiece that speaks to the profound themes of death, lamentation, and ultimate hope.

Mozart's Requiem holds a unique place in the repertoire of sacred music, resonating with the somber atmosphere of Good Friday. Its rich harmonies and poignant melodies serve as a poignant backdrop for our reflections on the crucifixion, inviting us to enter the mystery of Christ's passion and the human experience of suffering.

Through the intricate layers of the Requiem, we encounter a journey of lamentation and supplication, echoing the anguish felt by Christ on the cross and the anguish of humanity in the face of sin and death. Yet, woven throughout the music, there is a thread of hope, a glimpse of redemption that pierces through the darkness.

As we immerse ourselves in the depths of Mozart's Requiem, may we find solace in the promise of resurrection, even amidst the shadows of Good Friday. May this sacred music guide our hearts and minds as we contemplate the sacrifice of Christ and the unfathomable love that led Him to lay down His life for us.

Some object to using Requiem on Good Friday. Our Requiem is not for Christ. Our requiem is for ourselves. We mourn our sin and grieve it. Grieving our sin is the beginning of discipleship. It is when we have died to self and pick up our cross daily, then we are healed.

We will have selections from Mozart's Requiem, but we will have other music to complement our theme including a prelude of "What Wondrous Love Is This" on flute and our Preparation for Worship will be played on the organ: "O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde gross" by J. S. Bach:

O people, lament your great sin,
for the sake of which Christ
left his Father's bosom
and came to earth.
Of a pure, gentle virgin
Jesus was born for us;

he gave life to the dead and put aside all sickness
until the time arrived
that he should be sacrificed for us.
He bore the heavy burden of our sins
stretched out on the cross.

We believe these musical pieces will capture fully the idea of Shadows & Solace. The choir will close our service with Alleluia, one of the most often performed American choral works to close our service. It is both somber and yet hopeful.

TENEBRAE WORSHIP FOR GOOD FRIDAY

The service of Tenebrae, meaning “darkness” or “shadows,” has been practiced by the church since medieval times. Once a service for the monastic community, Tenebrae later became an important part of the worship of the medieval common folk during Holy Week. Friday we will join Christians of many generations throughout the world in using the liturgy of Tenebrae.

Tenebrae is a prolonged meditation on Christ’s suffering. Readings trace the story of Christ’s passion, music portrays his pathos, and the power of silence and darkness suggests the drama of this momentous day. We ponder the depth of Christ’s suffering through mounting darkness; through the return of the small but persistent flame of the Christ candle at the conclusion of the service, we anticipate the joy of ultimate victory.

BACKGROUND ON MOZART’S REQUIEM

While working on The Magic Flute, Mozart received a commission from a stranger to compose a Requiem, but under conditions of secrecy.

Count von Walsegg wanted a requiem for his wife, to be played every year on her anniversary – and some have suggested he might have wanted to pass it off as his own work.

With the encouragement of his own wife, Mozart accepted the challenge, and was paid a part-fee, with the rest to follow on completion. The deadline, according to one report, was four weeks. But Mozart had to go to Prague to conduct Tito – and the deadline continued to hang over him.

Mozart starts work, concentratedly, on 8 October 1791.

On 20 November, he takes to his bed with a worsening of the spells of ill health he had suffered during the last year. On 3 December, his condition appears to improve – and the next day a few close friends gather to sing over with him part of the still-unfinished Requiem.

That evening, Mozart's illness worsens, and just before 1am on 5 December, he dies, aged 35 with an initial cause of death registered as 'severe military fever.'

At Mozart's death, only the Introitus of the Requiem is fully scored. All the other movements, from the Kyrie fugue to the end of the Hostias, are only sketched. Franz Xaver Süssmayr, who has written the recitatives for *La clemenza di Tito*, completes much of the Requiem.

The presence of an incomplete Requiem as Mozart's very last work delights scholars, commentators, playwrights, and novelists to the present day. Again, the temptation to fuse life and work must be resisted: Mozart's last commission just happens to be for a requiem, after all.

But on the day, he died, Mozart himself declares: 'Didn't I say before that I was writing this Requiem for myself?' And, according to one eyewitness account, 'his last movement was an attempt to express with his mouth the drum passages in the Requiem.'

On hearing of Mozart's death, Haydn says: 'Posterity will not see such a talent again in a hundred years!' And, as the American musicologist HC Robbins Landon later added, 'Posterity has not seen it in two hundred.'—*This article was originally published in The Complete Mozart, 2013.*

BACKGROUND ON OUR READINGS

This year we will have edited excerpts readings from "At Noon on Friday," by Dr Carl Hoefler. After nearly 40 years this publication is back in print and can be purchased on Amazon for only \$7.89.

One pastor wrote: "There are saints of the Church whose life and words have healed many wounded souls and guided multitudes safely to heaven's shore. Perhaps in the world to come they are the equivalent of Medal of Honor winners in spiritual warfare or Nobel Prize recipients for eternal peacemaking. Too often, however, in this world their good name and inspirational words are interred with their bones. This ought not be the case — especially for Rev. Hoefler."

FROM THE BACK COVER

RICHARD CARL HOEFLE is professor of Preaching and Worship and Dean of Chapel at the Lutheran Seminary, Columbia, South Carolina. Dr. Hoefler is a graduate of Wittenberg University and the Hama School of Theology, Springfield, Ohio. He has a Doctor of Divinity degree from Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia. Dr. Hoefler has also served as pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Springfield, Ohio, and as an instructor at Wittenberg University and Sinclair College, Dayton, Ohio.

AT NOON ON FRIDAY is a volume of reflections on the seven last words of Jesus as he hung on the cross. In his usual masterly fashion, Dr. Richard C. Hoefler holds up before his listeners the cross of Christ and calls for a devotional response — not merely an intellectual one. The goal of these sermons is to prompt something important, different, and decisive to happen to both speaker and listener. They were written in such a way as to create an experience of participating in the three hours our Lord suffered. In the author's words: "The seven words of Christ are like seven panels of one single stained-glass window, reflecting forth the light of the total act of our Lord's crucifixion."

ENGLISH FROM LATIN TRANSLATION

WORD 1: Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

I. *Requiem*

*Requiem aeternam dona eis,
Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Te decet hymnus, Deus, in Sion,
et tibi reddetur votum in Jerusalem.
Exaudi orationem meam,
ad te omnis care veniet.
Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Kyrie eleison.*

*Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.*

Rest

Grant them eternal rest, Lord,
and let perpetual light shine on them.
You are praised, God, in Zion,
and homage will be paid to You in Jerusalem.
Hear my prayer,
to You all flesh will come.
Grant them eternal rest, Lord,
and let perpetual light shine on them.
Lord have mercy upon us.

Christ have mercy upon us.
Lord have mercy upon us.

WORD 2: Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

II. *Rex Tremendae*

*Rex tremendae majestatis,
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,
Salve me, fons pietatis.*

Tremendous King

King of tremendous majesty,
Who freely saves the redeemed,
Save me, O fount of goodness.

WORD 3: Woman, behold, thy son! Behold, thy mother!

III. *Sanctus*

*Sanctus. Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth!
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.*

Holy

Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God of Sabaoth.
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

WORD 4: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

IV. *Lacrimosa*

*Lacrimosa dies ilia
Qua resurget ex favilla
Judicandus homo reus.
Huic ergo parce, Deus,
Pie Jesu Domine,
Dona eis requiem.*

Tearful

That tearful day
When from the dust shall rise
Guilty man to be judged.
Therefore spare him, O God,
Merciful Jesus,
Lord Grant them rest.

WORD 5: I thirst.

V. *Agnus Dei*

*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona eis requiem.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona eis requiem sempiternam.*

Lamb of God

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the
world, grant them rest.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the
world, grant them everlasting rest.

WORD 6: It is finished.

VI. *Benedictus*

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.

Blessed

Blessed is He who cometh in the name of
the Lord.

WORD 7: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

VII. *Alleluia*

Hallelujah

ORIGINS OF ALLELUIA BY RANDALL THOMPSON

"Many people ask me why it is tinged with sadness. And I thought might like to know why.

It was written at the request of Serge Koussevitzky for the opening event at the Berkshire Music Center in 1940. The first thing that happened was this piece was sung by the whole student body. They were going to have one hour to rehearse it and so I thought when I was wondering what kind of piece to write, I better not have too many words.

And that's how I invented the text...

He (Koussevitzky) had asked for fanfare to open with. Actually, he would have said "Fahn-Far!" But, I didn't feel like writing a "fahn-far."

And, you know why? Because, at the very moment I took the pencil in hand to write that piece, those motorcycles were coming down, speeding down, across Belgium and into France, that great civilized nation, was going to be destroyed and perhaps all the civilized world as we know it why any alleluia at all, then? Well, it's because the word alleluia can be said in several different ways. It can be said as it does in Messiah as a shout a jubilant shout of joy, celebration, rapture. Or, it can be said on bended knees: "Lord's name be praised." Here, it is said on bended knees. We find this in the Bible and I don't want to be concerned about it, but I try to explain the quality of that word which so many people sing (and have heard it sung).

I think the best explanation for that, of the emotional quality of that piece, I think it comes from understanding (and perhaps you enjoy it more) to know that it means blessed be the name of the Lord in the sense that it is meant in the book of Job and quoted in the funeral service: "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." That kind of resignation to God's will, resignation to your destiny if you like your faith, somehow helps to comfort. Not to fight against it, but to accept it, and it [sorrow] vanishes. The meaning of this Alleluia, written in a time of great stress

and sorrow, was an attempt to put into music something of what all who were growing up in that time were feeling. Excuse me for giving this autobiographical note, but since it is sung quite a lot, I felt like telling you what I had in mind and in heart when I wrote it thank you.”—Transcription from YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtFPz1nsWmU>

THOUGHTS & QUOTES ON REQUIEM

Such music must have an element of yearning and longing, since we sing for those we have lost, and since all the best and even the most joyful of the songs of the earth have that elegiac [something that expresses similar mournfulness or sorrow] note of exile and yearning for home, but it must also have an element of joy and mystery, since it echoes the joy and music of Heaven. The great Sanctus in Mozart’s final Requiem seems to me to combine these two qualities in music of heart-breaking beauty. — Malcolm Guite

On October 16th, 1849, Chopin made one final request: That Mozart’s Requiem be performed at his funeral. It was performed under the baton of Meyerbeer. Not Liszt but an organist named Wély performed the B minor and E minor Préludes from Op. 29, and the funeral march from the B-flat minor Sonata was performed by the orchestra in an arrangement by Reber.

To add further intrigue, when the unfinished manuscript was displayed in Brussels in the 1950s, a section was torn from the last page and never retrieved. As Mozart worked on the Requiem on his deathbed, it’s highly likely that someone stole the last notes ever written by Mozart.

Haydn, who once told Mozart’s father: “Before God and as an honest man I tell you that your son is the greatest composer known to me...he has taste and, what is more, the most profound knowledge of composition.”

“It is the economy with which he achieves his effects that is so impressive; the famous criticism [not on Requiem] made by the Emperor, ‘Too many notes, Mozart, too many notes’, was singularly inapposite, for if we compare Mozart with those who came after him, we find he could express everything that they wished to ‘say’ but with less rhetoric and fewer notes.” (Anthony Hopkins)

For those who want to know more about Mozart’s Requiem I highly recommend:

<https://theclassicreview.com/beginners-guides/mozart-requiem-a-beginners-guide/>

I also thought this was very good about Mozart:

[Mozart: The Funny, Rebellious Prodigy. History Documentary, Including Facial Re-creations. \(youtube.com\)](#)

DEVOTIONAL PRAYER

CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION

O LORD,

I marvel that you should become incarnate,
be crucified, dead, and buried.

The sepulcher calls forth my adoring wonder,
for it is empty and you are risen;
the four-fold gospel attests it,
the living witnesses prove it,
my heart's experience knows it.

Give me to die with you that I may rise to new life,
for I wish to be as dead and buried
to sin, to selfishness, to the world;
that I might not hear the voice of the charmer,
and might be delivered from his lusts.

O Lord, there is much ill about me — crucify it,
much flesh within me — mortify it.

Purge me from selfishness,
the fear of man, the love of approbation,
the shame of being thought old-fashioned,
the desire to be cultivated or modern.

Let me reckon my old life dead

because of crucifixion,
and never feed it as a living thing.

Grant me to stand with my dying Savior,
to be content to be rejected,
to be willing to take up unpopular truths,
and to hold fast despised teachings until death.

Help me to be resolute and Christ-contained.
Never let me wander from the path of obedience
to your will.

Strengthen me for the battles ahead.

Give me courage for all the trials,
and grace for all the joys.

Help me to be a holy, happy person,
free from every wrong desire,
from everything contrary to your mind.

Grant me more and more of the resurrection life:
may it rule me,
may I walk in its power,
and be strengthened through its influence.

(From The Valley of Vision, Puritan Prayers and Devotions)