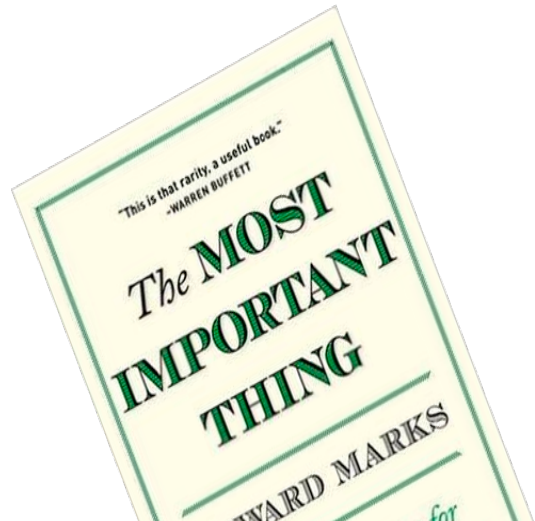


# To create a distance

- the ways of distraction -



**Good Friday, 2022**  
Knox Church, Ōtautahi Christchurch

*Good Friday is the day on which the Church remembers the crucifixion and death of Jesus. On this day, we recall the people's cruelty to Jesus, and interpret it as human nature's desire to push God away. Accordingly several aspects of the usual service that assert the presence of God are omitted. There is no opening greeting ("May God be with you") and no benediction at the end. Further, following the Prayer of Confession there is no Assurance of Pardon.*

*The heart of the Good Friday service is the reading of the Passion. This year the Passion is taken from John's gospel.*

*The service ends when, at the conclusion of the closing reflection, the minister leaves the church. Please keep a silence in the church after the service, and when you feel moved to leave, please do so quietly. Feel no pressure to leave the church immediately; the minister will not be waiting at the door.*

*While Good Friday is a day of sorrow, and a stark occasion in the calendar of the Christian Faith, it does not stand alone. On Easter Day the sequel to Good Friday begins. It is important that you hear the second part of the story of the death of Jesus. Please make an effort to come to the service on Easter Day. If you are out of town on Sunday, you can always view the Easter sermon online - the Youtube link will be posted on the Knox website: <http://www.knoxchurch.co.nz/news.html>*

## **The Service**

### **Sorry to intrude**

**The Reading of the Passion:** John 18 & 19

### **Prayer of Confession:**

In light of this story, O God,  
what's a half-decent human being meant to do?  
To throw a dice,  
in the hope of bagging a tunic that somebody no longer needs?  
To hide behind some religious sense of greater importance  
while blood flows into the earth?  
To wash our hands of things we could have stopped,  
or to say that we never knew our friend?  
Dear God, that's all been done - and done again.  
So we say:

Lord have mercy,  
**CHRIST HAVE MERCY,**  
Lord have mercy.

*Silence*

As the emerging Son of God  
treads his way through the unfolding tragedy,  
person after person finds a way of avoiding having to look at what's  
happening.

Person after person focuses on their own wee part,  
while the larger part spins and tears through love like a rip saw.

Again we say:

Lord have mercy,  
**CHRIST HAVE MERCY,**  
Lord have mercy.

*Silence*

God, be with us as we reflect on the passion of your Son.  
A third time we say:

Lord have mercy,  
**CHRIST HAVE MERCY,**  
Lord have mercy.

*Silence*

**Organ Voluntary:** O Mensch, beweine dein' Sünde gross  
J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

## A series of spoken and musical reflections



**The soldiers gamble:** To avoid processing  
their having seen an innocent person run  
through their "machine for guilty people", the  
soldiers roll dice and gamble for his tunic.  
Violence, office, distraction and distance.

**Musical Reflection:** AWOL

**The religious people find other things to  
focus on:** The religious authorities rationalise  
their killing of Jesus, and their disposing of his  
body, by recourse to their religion's sense of  
purity and solemnity. Perverted religion and  
religious irrelevancies.

**Musical Reflection:** False Idols





**Pontius Pilate fails to use his power well:** The judicial authorities, having caved in, create a distance from the tragedy by washing their hands of the whole affair. Failed responsibilities and impossible attempts at distancing.

**Musical Reflection:** Official Statement

**Peter provides, in some ways, the hardest blow:** Peter, a friend of Jesus, becomes frightened of the danger, so sets himself apart by denying that he even knows the Lord. Distance and betrayal.



### **Hymn:**

Salley Gardens

Irish folk tune



1. Here hangs a man discarded,  
a scarecrow hoisted high,  
a nonsense pointing nowhere  
to all who hurry by.  
Can such a clown of sorrows  
still bring a useful word  
where faith and love seem phantoms  
and every hope absurd?
2. Can he give help or comfort  
to lives by comfort bound,  
where drums of dazzling progress  
give strangely hollow sound?  
Life emptied of all meaning,  
drained out in bleak distress,



can share in broken silence  
my deepest emptiness;

3. and love that freely entered  
the pit of life's despair  
can name our hidden darkness  
and suffer with us there.  
Christ, in our darkness risen,  
help all who long for light  
to hold the hand of promise  
and walk into the light.

*Brian Wren (b.1936)*

### **Prayers for the World and the Lord's Prayer**

*To the minister's words, "To create a distance, we draw upon whatever is necessary",  
you are invited to respond **"GOD, HAVE MERCY"**.*

**OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN  
HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME,  
YOUR KINGDOM COME,  
YOUR WILL BE DONE,  
ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN.  
GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD.  
FORGIVE US OUR SINS  
AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST US.  
SAVE US FROM THE TIME OF TRIAL  
AND DELIVER US FROM EVIL.  
FOR THE KINGDOM, THE POWER AND THE GLORY  
ARE YOURS NOW AND FOR EVER. AMEN.**

### **Hymn:**

Rockingham

Edward Miller (1731-1807)



1. 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.

2. 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 to his blood.
3. 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?

*Isaac Watts (1674-1748)*

### Epilogue

### No Benediction



The dice didn't help



Religious priorities



Secular power



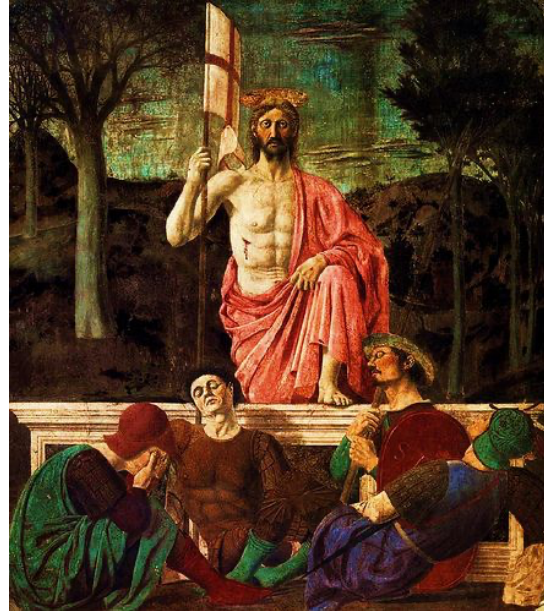
Peter spoke up and said to Jesus,  
"I will never leave you, even though all the rest do!"  
(Matthew 26:33)



# Truth and Hope

## Easter Day Service

10:00am, Sunday 17 April 2022



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