

Grace and peace in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

On this Good Friday, we try to understand the disciples' fear and despair. For three years they followed the man who they believed was the Messiah, the Savior prophesied in the Old Testament,. True, they had the testimony of the prophets that the Promised One of Israel should suffer in the place of sinners (Isaiah 53, for example). Jesus also announced three times His intention to suffer and die for us. However, when the time had come, they could not believe it. Most fled, and only John, Mary, Jesus 'mother, Mary, Cleopas' wife, and Mary Magdalene stood at the foot of the cross.

We also try to understand the despair of Jesus on the cross. He was flogged, beaten, and crucified, but worse than physical suffering was the abandonment of His disciples. And worst of all was abandonment by God. This is the punishment we deserve, the complete absence forever of the presence of God in our lives.

Thank God, we know the rest of the story. We know the risen Christ. But at this moment we reflect on the price of victory, the promise of eternal life for us. We hear the last words of Jesus Christ.

The First Word: (Luke 23:34)

And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.

God the Father, you well know that we have sinned much. We often live like the unbelievers around us and not like your children. Forgive us for the pain we have caused you and others. Forgive us

because of Jesus Christ, who died for us. As you forgive us, help us to forgive others as well. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

#### The Second Word: (Luke 23: 39-43)

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

O Lord Jesus, we praise you because you have opened the door of heaven. You suffered the pains of hell so that we could enjoy paradise. Thank my Lord! Help us to share this with others, so that many may enter heaven through the door you have opened. Amen.

#### The Third Word: (John 19: 25-27)

But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

O Savior Jesus, help us to love as you love us. In the midst of so much suffering you had compassion for your mother. Teach us how to love our mothers and fathers and brothers and children. Help us to treat you with love and above all, to speak of you, so that you may become saved. In your name we pray. Amen.

The Fourth Word: (John 19: 28-29)

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth.

Holy Spirit, fill us today. Quench our thirst for God with the living water that is Jesus Christ. As Jesus suffered physical thirst to save us, so teach us to endure the afflictions of this world and take the time to offer others that water of salvation. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

The Fifth Word: (Matthew 27:46)

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Lord Jesus, no one can understand the depth of your suffering for us. You were forsaken on the cross so that we would never suffer that

despair. When we feel alone, let us see your presence. And help us guide other people who are depressed and disillusioned. In your name we pray, O Lord. Amen.

#### The Sixth Word: (Luke 23:46)

Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for forgiveness and eternal life and the love you give us through Jesus Christ. We thank you because you quench our spiritual thirst and because you never abandon us. Father, into your hands we entrust our lives. We trust in you, Lord. As Christ died for us, we want to live for you. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

#### The Seventh Word: (John 19:30)

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

The suffering that Christ suffered, was for you. Now it's all over. All the prophecies have been fulfilled. The whole price of salvation has been paid. All of our sins have been blotted out. It's finished! O Savior Jesus Christ, you have accomplished all. You have the victory over the evil one, over sin and over death. Holy Spirit, help us share that victory in our lives. Make us live with confidence, sure of forgiveness. And give us strength to overcome temptation. In the name of Jesus. Amen.