

# Good Friday 2017 Seven Last Words in Contemporary Images



The original Good Friday was a day of terror and injustice. As Jesus was dying on the cross, he cried out in anguish, love and forgiveness. We offer the images in this booklet as a way to reflect on the seven last words of Jesus and how these words have resonance in the terror and injustice of the world today. We invite you to reflect on them in your own time and pace, during this worship and afterwards, as we head toward Easter morning and the resurrection of Love.



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## THE FIRST WORD

“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” Luke 23:34



Members of the Ku Klux Klan yell as they fly Confederate flags during a rally at the statehouse in Columbia, South Carolina, July 18, 2015. (Chris Keane/Reuters)

Luke 23:26-34

As they led him off, they made Simon, a man from Cyrene who happened to be coming in from the countryside, carry the cross behind Jesus. A huge crowd of people followed, along with women weeping and carrying on. At one point Jesus turned to the women and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, don’t cry for me. Cry for yourselves and for your children. The time is coming when they’ll say, ‘Lucky the women who never conceived! Lucky the wombs that never gave birth! Lucky the breasts that never gave milk!’ Then they’ll start calling to the mountains, ‘Fall down on us!’ calling to the hills, ‘Cover us up!’ If people do these things to a live, green tree, can you imagine what they’ll do with deadwood?”

Two others, both criminals, were taken along with him for execution.

When they got to the place called Skull Hill, they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right, the other on his left.

Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them; they don’t know what they’re doing.”

*Scripture passages taken from Eugene Peterson’s The Message paraphrase of the Bible.*

## THE SECOND WORD

“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” Luke 23:43



Inmates sit in crowded conditions at the California Institute for Men in Chino, California. The U.S. has 5% of the world’s population and 25% of its prisoners (from [popularresistance.org](http://popularresistance.org)). (Photo from Associated Press, California Department of Corrections)

Luke 23:39-43

One of the criminals hanging alongside cursed him:

“Some Messiah you are! Save yourself! Save us!”

But the other one made him shut up:

“Have you no fear of God? You’re getting the same as him. We deserve this, but not him—he did nothing to deserve this.”

Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you enter your kingdom.”

He said, “Don’t worry, I will. Today you will join me in paradise.”

## THE THIRD WORD

“Woman, here is your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” John 19:26-27



Canadians Peggy Karas and Liz Stark reading with friends Zayiha and Majed, whose family they helped sponsor to relocate from Syria. (Damon Winter/The New York Times)

John 19:24-27

While the soldiers were looking after themselves, Jesus' mother, his aunt, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood at the foot of the cross. Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her.

He said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.”

Then to the disciple, “Here is your mother.”

From that moment the disciple accepted her as his own mother.

## THE FOURTH WORD

“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Matthew 27:46



Hundreds of Eritrean, Ethiopian, Somali, Nigerian and other sub-Saharan migrants crammed into boats off the Libyan coast, some of them asphyxiated and crushed aboard, October 2016.

(Aris Messinis/Agence France-Presse, Getty Images)

Matthew 27:35-46

After they had finished nailing him to the cross and were waiting for him to die, they whiled away the time by throwing dice for his clothes. Above his head they had posted the criminal charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Along with him, they also crucified two criminals, one to his right, the other to his left. People passing along the road jeered, shaking their heads in mock lament: “You bragged that you could tear down the Temple and then rebuild it in three days—so show us your stuff! Save yourself! If you’re really God’s Son, come down from that cross!”

The high priests, along with the religion scholars and leaders, were right there mixing it up with the rest of them, having a great time poking fun at him: “He saved others—he can’t save himself! King of Israel, is he? Then let him get down from that cross. We’ll *all* become believers then! He was so sure of God—well, let him rescue his ‘Son’ now—if he wants him! He did claim to be God’s Son, didn’t he?” Even the two criminals crucified next to him joined in the mockery.

From noon to three, the whole earth was dark. Around mid-afternoon Jesus groaned out of the depths, crying loudly, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*” which means, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”

## THE FIFTH WORD

“I am thirsty.” John 19:28



Women in Mali carry water. In a country of 16 million, 3.7 million have no access to clean water, 13 million have no access to adequate hygiene, 4,500 children die every year because of poor sanitation. Globally, 900 children die every day because of no access to clean water. Women and girls are the primary water-haulers around the world, often putting their lives in danger in the process.

(Layton Thompson/wateraid.org)

John 19:28-29

Jesus, seeing that everything had been completed so that the Scripture record might also be complete, then said, “I am thirsty.”

A jug of sour wine was standing by. Someone put a sponge soaked with the wine on a javelin and lifted it to his mouth.

## THE SIXTH WORD

“It is finished.” John 19:30



Lethal injection chamber and witness gallery at San Quentin State Prison, California.  
(Eric Risberg/Associated Press)

John 19:30

After he took the wine, Jesus said, “It’s done . . . complete.”

## THE SEVENTH WORD

“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Luke 23:46



Mourners release sky lanterns at a vigil in the aftermath of the shooting massacre that killed 49 and wounded 53 people at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando. (from abcnews.go.com and videohive.net)

Luke 23:44-56

By now it was noon. The whole earth became dark, the darkness lasting three hours—a total blackout. The Temple curtain split right down the middle. Jesus called loudly, “Father, I place my life in your hands!” Then he breathed his last.

When the captain there saw what happened, he honored God: “This man was innocent! A good man, and innocent!”

All who had come around as spectators to watch the show, when they saw what actually happened, were overcome with grief and headed home. Those who knew Jesus well, along with the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a respectful distance and kept vigil.

There was a man by the name of Joseph, a member of the Jewish High Council, a man of good heart and good character. He had not gone along with the plans and actions of the council. His hometown was the Jewish village of Arimathea. He lived in alert expectation of the kingdom of God. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Taking him down, he wrapped him in a linen shroud and placed him in a tomb chiseled into the rock, a tomb never yet used. It was the day before Sabbath, the Sabbath just about to begin.

The women who had been companions of Jesus from Galilee followed along. They saw the tomb where Jesus’ body was placed. Then they went back to prepare burial spices and perfumes. They rested quietly on the Sabbath, as commanded.