



# Lenten Reflections

Join us through Lent to reflect upon Jesus' words from the Cross.

Each week you will find a new set of reflections here to aid you in your spiritual journey through Lent.

## **'...today you will be with me in paradise'**

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:39-43)

# Reflection

*An imagined internal monologue of the 'good thief':*

"It's too late now.....to tell anyone....."

I'd heard a bit about him, how he wanted to share a better way, tales of his compassion and care, and his uncanny knack of seeing people as they really are, and then, not judging them, but sending them on their way with a different take on things.....

And here, of all places, he speaks to me! Me? Really?.....

I deserve to be here, got away with it up till now, ducking and weaving, making life miserable for others - and myself.

What do they say, "reap as you sow"? - something like that.

Well, that's me - the company I kept, unable to break away, lost, trapped, afraid.....regrets.....

I dare to look at him - and then here, of all places, I ask him to remember me when he comes into his kingdom.....

You would think he would turn away and inwards, close himself, protect himself, just get on with dying.....

But no, the compassion and the care and the hope, all rolled into one - and he offers them to me. "Today, you will be with me in Paradise." Safety, peace, release.

And it is too late now to tell anyone about Him."



"Christ Crucified with the Good Thief" by Francesco Allegrini

(Copyright: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Open Access))

**A few notes...**

Crucifixion has a long history, from 600-500BCE. It was a public form of capital punishment, designed to produce a slow death (often by asphyxiation or sheer exhaustion) as a warning. The word excruciating has its origins in crucifixion.

Crucifying Jesus between robbers was a deliberate ploy by the Roman authorities to add to His humiliation and wrongly ranking Jesus as a criminal.

Legend has names for the thieves. The mocking thief is sometimes identified as Gestas. The penitent robber is variously named as Dismas, Demas or Dumachus. Some tales suggest this thief was a Robin Hood type character. Other stories have him encountering Mary, Joseph and the infant Jesus as they fled to Egypt.

Paradise is a Persian word meaning 'a walled garden'. To be invited into the garden by a Persian king was a great honour.

# SCAN ME



**“Jesus, Remember Me”** from The Taizé  
Community

[https://youtu.be/r6tVReXsioM?si=6-  
Xi1V2hAKiQ1cAf](https://youtu.be/r6tVReXsioM?si=6-Xi1V2hAKiQ1cAf)

LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS, BELIEVES ALL THINGS,  
HOPES ALL THINGS, ENDURES ALL THINGS.  
AT SOME POINT EVERYTHING WILL BE DONE.  
EXCEPT LOVE.  
LOVE IS NEVER DONE.

BY MARTIN WROE, ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF THE IONA COMMUNITY

# Hymn & Prayer (F.W. Faber)

There's a wideness in God's mercy like the  
wideness of the sea;  
there's a kindness in His justice which is more  
than liberty.

There is welcome for the sinner, and more  
graces for the good;  
there is mercy with the Saviour; there is  
healing in His blood.

For the love of God is broader than the  
measure of our mind;  
and the heart of the Eternal is most  
wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more simple, we would  
take Him at His word,  
and our lives would be illumined by the  
presence of our Lord.