

When Silence Falls
The Stations of the Cross Re-Imagined

Anna Burke

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by Anna Burke

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Introduction

Gathering Prayer

O God of the Calvary hour, as we gather in our community this evening to pray The Stations of the Cross, we are aware that in this hour our story merges with yours and that together we face that journey when the cross brings us to the ground. In your death every death is transformed, every shadow and every loss. As we walk with you again on the longest mile, help us to be instruments of the new creation where every tear will be wiped away.

May we see the Light on the hill.

May we hear the Peace in the noise.

May we touch the Hope in the fading light.

May we feel the Sorrow in the earth.

May we hold the Teardrop in the towel.

May we feel the Healing in the pain.

May we drink the Water from the source.

May we give the Pardon to the one who asks.

May we sense the Victory in the failure.

May we seek the Beginning in the last breath.

May we await the Morning in the silence.

Lighting the Candle

As we bring light to this candle we hold in living memory the light that never goes out. The light of the candle honours the presence of God with us. As the warmth of the candlelight fills the prayer space we know that the love of God holds the universe together.

Holy Spirit of God, give us strength for the lonely hour and hold the light for us when silence falls. Amen.

The First Station

The Sentence Is Passed

It is quite clear that this man has done nothing that deserves a death sentence. I will therefore have him scourged and then release him.

(Luke 23:15-16)

We have waited for the sentence through the longest night, fearing to hear, yet wanting to know. He was a young man in his prime. His dreams were alive with hope and in his eyes there shone the light of a new dawn. His teacher in the village school remembered the child who had a wisdom beyond his years and as he grew to maturity there was growing evidence of a mind of rare beauty and of a heart of deep emotion. His eventual decision to leave his home in response to the call of his spirit did not surprise his family and friends. They had heard the tenderness in his voice and they had seen the abundance of his gifts.

The years passed and the young man began to leave footprints on the hills of Judea and in the valley of the Jordan River. His words of peace and reconciliation filled the rocks and crevices and the holiness of his life breathed out life across the landscape. The people followed him and in his presence they found a friend of extraordinary compassion and faithfulness. He became their voice against oppressive and unjust structures and with his shepherd's staff he challenged the ethics of church and state. The authorities in the land watched with dismay and fear as he

called the people to a kingdom not of this world. This man was not seen to be a friend of Caesar and his innocence would be tried in the court of the guilty. This hour of the sentencing has gone down in history and the earth still trembles and the heartbeat of the universe grinds to a halt as we hear once again that an innocent man is given the death sentence.

Sound: Hammer on wood

Interpretation: Jesus enters the prayer space with his hands tied.

Pause for *The loneliest road is the moment of rejection*

Reflection: *by the people we call our own. Do I pause to consider the other side of every story?*

We Pray:

Jesus, stay with us through the darkness

For people who are awaiting the sentence of the law, may we be God's Mercy. **R**

For families who carry the pain of a prison sentence, may we be God's Hope. **R**

For children who are sentenced to life on the streets, may we be God's Protection. **R**

For refugees who are sentenced to lives of uncertainty, may we be God's Shelter. **R**

For ethnic groups who are sentenced to exclusion, may we be God's Care. **R**

For nations that are sentenced to war and famine, may we be God's Justice. **R**

For hearts that are broken with heavy crosses, may we be
God's Compassion. R

For all innocent people who carry intolerable sorrow, may
we be God's Presence. R

Concluding Prayer:

God is my light; I will not be afraid. All I ask is to live in
God's house all the days of my life.

Deep within me a voice directs my eyes to look for the
face of God.

I am not afraid; I know that I shall see the goodness of
God. (Psalms 27)