

GOOD FRIDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Holy Week 2017 began with terrorist attacks on two Coptic Christian churches in Egypt, and then a Good Friday bombing by the United States in Afghanistan using the world's most powerful non-nuclear device. As churches globally prayed for the victims of violence and war, Egypt's Coptic Bishop Kyrillos reflected on his country's experience that "with these incidents we are now living with Christ in his pain".

When Jesus stands before Pilate he says he could have called on heavenly power to protect him, but chooses not to. Even when he knows his end is near, he refuses to sanction violence in any form and allows himself to be executed. In the face of violence Jesus rejects resistance and retaliation. Jesus is determined to fulfil his mission as the beloved Son of God, the peacemaking Christ.

On Good Friday we stand with the nonviolent Jesus as he suffers torture and execution, yet remains centred in the God of love, forgiving and nonviolent to the end. We also stand with the crucified peoples of the world. As followers of Jesus, today we recall the futility of violence and capital punishment. We reject the resort to conflict and war to resolve tensions, and denounce arms trading and the huge sums of money given towards producing bombs and guns. May we faithfully follow the nonviolent Jesus and bring peace and love to humanity. Good Friday invites us to reflect on the challenging mission before us if we faithfully follow Christ.

Lord, make us worthy witnesses of the Gospel and of your love; pour out your mercy upon humanity; renew your Church and protect persecuted Christians. Grant peace to the whole world. Amen.