

# *Behold the Man*

a service for Good Friday morning based on the trial of Jesus



*Ecce Homo*

detail of Mark Wallinger statue ad 2000

**Prepare** if you can a table with a copy of the *Ecce Homo*, a bowl of water large enough to wash not merely dip your hands and a towel.

The material for the trial scene is a slightly adapted version of that found in **Stages on the Way – Worship Resources for Lent, Holy Week and Easter** (Wild Goose Worship Group) Some of the prayers were composed by Brother Roger of Taize.

**Imagine** the scene – in the centre of a courtyard the figure of Jesus tied and bound, surrounded by his accusers and those who will pass judgement.



## OPENING PRAYER

O Christ,

You take our burdens upon your shoulders,

So that freed from all that weighs us down in body, mind and spirit,

We can walk anew on the way of faith.

As we begin this day on which we call to mind the events that led to your condemnation, passion and death, may we be inspired to offer something of our own lives in service of your kingdom of justice, peace and love; that our eyes may reflect the radiance of your blessed countenance.

You who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen

## SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 50: 4-9

The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue.

So that I may know how to reply to the wearied;

he provides me with speech.

Each morning he wakes me to hear; to listen like a disciple.

The Lord has opened my ear.

For my part, I made no resistance, neither did I turn away. I

offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who tore at my beard; I did not cover my face against insult and spittle.

The Lord comes to my help, so that I am untouched by insults. So

too, I set my face like flint; I know I shall not be ashamed. My

vindicator is here at hand. Does anyone start proceedings against

me? Then let us go to court together. Who thinks they have a case against me? Let them approach me.

The Lord is coming to my help; who dare condemn me?

And so the trial begins...

## Who thinks they have a case against me?

Seven characters make fictional allegations; as though they are witnesses at the trial of Jesus.

After each reflection we join in singing the refrain:

*Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*

*Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*

### 1) a Farmer comes forward

You have it coming to you!

You cannot traipse around the country with a dozen vagrants, some of whom can't speak properly, and expect to be believed. Your 'disciples'... if you can call them that... are common. And you, with all your simple stories of lost coins and runaway sheep are far from sophisticated. People want a real Messiah, not a former tradesman. If you pretend to be one when you are really the other, you have to face the consequences.



Sung response: *Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*

### 2) a Pharisee comes forward



You have it coming to you!

There is a time for playing the fool. There is a time for poking fun at what is serious in religion and politics.

But there is a border line between jesting and indiscretion, which obviously you don't recognise.

Riding on a donkey, with your starry eyed friends throwing the shirts off their backs in front of you, and

doing this in 'royal style' ... That may be quite a laugh among drunks and vagabonds, when the streets are empty of civilised people. But not in the full light of day during the most sacred week of the year. Those who behave in such a way must face the consequences!

Sung response: *Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*

### 3) a Trader comes forward



You have it coming to you!

The police saw you... the priests saw you...  
everyone saw you...

And even though some cheered, don't be deluded.  
'the Temple is a house of prayer' – you cried; and  
who would disagree? So why scatter pigeons and  
turn tables? Why scatter coins all over the place?

Of course, if it's sensationalism that you're after, you're going  
about it in the right way. You might well say that people are worth  
more than sparrows, but just wait and see what comes to you for  
dispersing the doves destined for sacrifice.

Sung response: *Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*

### 4) a Priest comes forward



You have it coming to you!

Our place of worship is not a laboratory for  
your experiments. It's not a place for seeing  
how far you can push it before someone  
cries 'enough!'

People sit still. They're here to listen to our preaching. They do not move  
from their assigned places, not while we're in charge.

But you... you call the sinners, cripples and suffering forward, with their  
withered limbs and scabby faces, they line up before you as if this place  
was a circus or freak show. They come for healing you say. Well, there's a  
time and a place for healing, but not here and not now!

Sung response: *Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*

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## 5) a Worshipper comes forward



You have it coming to you!  
Why do you bring God into the streets  
and the market places? Why sit with the  
down and outs and tell them God is with  
them? Why keep company with  
prostitutes, tax collectors and foreign  
occupiers; and tell them that our God loves them too?

You cannot do this to God. You cannot take him to where you want to take him or share him with those who would not be welcome in the Temple. Unless of course you are not really one of the chosen people, you're an imposter!

Sung response: *Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*

## 6) Judas comes forward



You have it coming to you! And I'm going  
to make sure it does.  
Three years I've listened to you, but you  
always let me down. Just when you have  
everyone eating out of your hands and the  
people wanting to make you king; you  
chickened out, ran away to the hills.

Well, it's time that I took charge, I can be your agent, I've already negotiated the fee. Thirty pieces of silver, not to be wasted on pointless acts of homage. Not long to wait now, you'll soon get the chance to prove who you are!

Sung response: *Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*



## 7) a Labourer comes forward

You have it coming to you!

You may not know it, but this wood has your name written all over it!

Of course, being a carpenter yourself, you could do all kinds of lovely things with it... turn it, sand it, smooth it out and give it shape and purpose.



But, unlike you, we're odd jobbers, not craftsmen. We'll do anything for money. We usually have to keep this kind of work quiet. Working for the Romans would usually get us into trouble with the locals, but not today! Like everyone's been saying, you really do have it coming to you!

Sung response: *Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom.*

## THE VERDICT

**GOSPEL READING:** Mark 14: 60-65

Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

"I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked.<sup>64</sup> "You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

They all condemned him as worthy of death. Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophecy!" And the guards took him and beat him.

HYMN <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3M4uUJibpw>

During the singing of the hymn we wash our hands  
in recognition of our complicity in the sins of humanity.







1. O sacred head, sore wounded,  
Defiled and put to scorn:  
O kingly head, surrounded  
With mocking crown of thorn;  
What sorrow mars thy grandeur?  
Can death thy bloom deflow'r?  
O countenance whose splendor  
The hosts of heav'n adore!

2 Thy beauty, long desired,  
Hath vanished from our sight:  
Thy pow'r is all expired,  
And quenched the light of light.  
Ah me! for whom thou diest,  
Hide not so far thy grace:  
Show me, O Love most highest,  
The brightness of thy face.

3 In thy most bitter passion  
My heart to share doth cry.  
With thee for my salvation  
Upon the cross to die.  
Ah, keep my heart thus moved  
To stand thy cross beneath,  
To mourn thee, well-beloved,  
Yet thank thee for thy death.

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## INTERCESSIONS

-  That we may be set free from our faults and set others free by our willingness to forgive... we pray:  
R. LORD HEAR US AND SAVE US
-  That all may live in the joy of God's peace, bringing justice to a bruised and hurting world... we pray:  
R. LORD HEAR US AND SAVE US
-  That the Church will go out in service of all and provide welcome to those who seek comfort and truth ... we pray:  
R. LORD HEAR US AND SAVE US
-  That those oppressed and excluded because of race, gender, orientation or creed will have their dignity and rights respected and upheld ... we pray:  
R. LORD HEAR US AND SAVE US
-  That those confronted by illness, disability, frailty and death will receive loving care and uplifting trust in God's goodness... we pray:  
R. LORD HEAR US AND SAVE US
-  That we may open our hearts and minds to receive from God's love the faith and hope that will sustain us in our own lives we pray:  
R. LORD HEAR US AND SAVE US

Our Father



## CONCLUDING PRAYER

Lord Christ,  
Enable us to place our trust in you,  
And so to live in the present moment.  
So often we forget  
That you never want human suffering,  
But peace in our hearts.

Christ Jesus,  
By your spirit you pray in us,  
More still, you dwell in us.  
Your miracle within us  
Is accomplished through the trust  
We have in you  
And your continual forgiveness.

As today we recall  
Your life giving passion and death;  
So may all who hunger  
For goodness and truth  
Join you in the glory of your kingdom,  
Where you live and reign  
For ever and ever. AMEN.