

Reflections in Music and Words for Holy Week 2020

We are grateful to our new Director of Music, Ann Hubble who has selected music for our reflections during Holy Week. In selecting these she has identified music that reflects:

- Meditations on the events of the Passion
- Our human response to this, perhaps in terms of regret over our own shortcomings
- Expressions of human suffering including crying out for help, particularly at this time when everyone is experiencing their own particular mixture of difficulties, sadness and anxiety because of the corona virus
- Calming, uplifting and even joyful qualities which give reassurance that even the worst times will pass and that in the meantime there are good things happening too and reasons to be joyful.

Ann Says:

‘for me, one of the most amazing things about some of the greatest works of the great composers is the emotional balance in the music, which can satisfy and uplift us in good times and bad: for instance, an astute colleague once remarked to me that Mozart’s Ave Verum could be performed equally appropriately at a wedding or a funeral.’

You can listen to Ann’s choices on the audio page of www.stoswalds.org.uk

You can read a reflection on the story told by the music, and hear a recording of it in the sound files on the audio page.

You might wish to end your time of reflection with Compline (night prayer) audio and written resources for this are on the website.

The music for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week is:

Monday: Brahms, A German Requiem, first movement

Tuesday: J.S. Bach, Chorale ‘Oh man thy grievous sin bemoan’

Wednesday: Nigel Dodd, ‘The tears of St Peter’, from ‘Five icons for St Peter’ performed in German 1989 by Ann Hubble (violin) and Renate Brahier (piano)

A reflection for Monday of Holy Week

By Rev'd Alison Brunt

Music: [Brahms, A German Requiem, first movement](#)

Selected by Ann Hubble

Brahms' requiem, written between 1865 and 1868 was written, in contrast to the Roman Catholic Latin requiem mass, in German, the language of the people who would hear it. It begins, in this first movement, not with prayers for the dead but with prayers and words of hope, from the bible, for those still living, but who mourn the loss of a loved one.

The words that we hear, in German, are translated as

Matthew 5:4 'Blessed are those who mourn,
 for they will be comforted'

Psalms 126 5,6 'May those who sow in tears
 reap with shouts of joy.
 Those who go out weeping,
 bearing the seed for sowing,
 shall come home with shouts of joy,
 carrying their sheaves.'

Holy Week is a season in which we make a special effort to call to mind the suffering that Jesus experienced in the last days of his life on earth through humiliation, pain and his brutal death. But as we are reminded that the passion of Christ journeys through great pain we know that it ends with the joy of the resurrection.

We may be overwhelmed with stories of hardship and pain and suffering in our own time. But Christ assures us, as the Psalmist did, centuries before him, that pain does not last for ever. The God who loves us will strengthen us in sorrow today and keep us with the hope of joy to come.

This piece of music captures perfectly that sense of the joy of Christ's love shining through and overcoming sorrow, bringing calm and peace to the troubled soul.