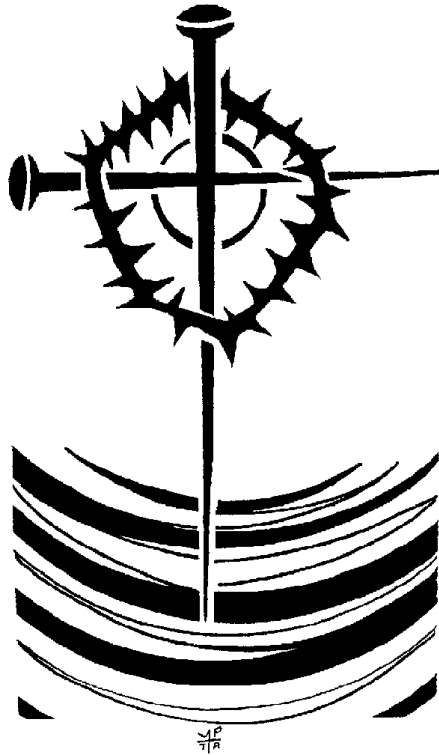


CHRIST  
CHURCH  
West Didsbury



SEVEN WORDS  
FROM THE CROSS

## THE FIRST WORD:

**Father forgive them, they do not know what they are doing.**

*Leader:* Before you die, Jesus Christ,  
and the world goes into deep darkness,  
take from our lives, from our souls, from our consciences  
all that has offended you, all that has hurt others,  
and all the intransigence which has made us numb  
to the plight of those whom we could help or heal.

Lamb of God,  
you take away the sins of the world

*All:* **Have mercy on us**

Lamb of God,  
you take away the sins of the world

*All:* **Have mercy on us**

Lamb of God,  
you take away the sins of the world

*All:* **Grant us peace.**

*Leader:* On this day, at this time,  
irrespective of our faith or lack of it,  
we accept deeply in our hearts  
the only words that can set us free:  
Your sins are forgiven, your sins are forgiven.

*All:* **Amen**

*Silence*

## THE SECOND WORD:

### **Today you will be with me in paradise**

*Leader:* Lord Jesus,  
remember us when you come into your kingdom.  
Remember us, not for our impressive acts,  
nor the things which we hope will appear in our obituaries.  
Remember us,  
not for the virtues we occasionally display  
or for any credit we think we have in our moral account.  
Remember us,  
as one of the criminal community who hung at your side,  
and if life will not let us be in paradise with you today,  
keep a place for us.

*All:* **Amen.**

*Silence*

## THE THIRD WORD:

### **Mother, there is your son.....**

*Leader:* For our families and friends,  
where they are open, loving, supportive,  
that their joy might be kept safe.  
Lord, hear us.

*All:* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For our families,  
where they are tense, troubled and fragmented,  
that they may find a way through pain,  
not a path away from it  
Lord, hear us.

*All:* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For our churches,  
where they risk welcoming the stranger,  
where in language, hospitality, evangelism and service,  
they employ the imagination rather than the rule book,  
that they might be encouraged and surprised by joy.  
Lord, hear us.

*All:* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For our churches,  
where they have become introverted,  
suspicious of the stranger,  
obsessed with dead rather than living stones,  
suffocated by tradition,  
that they might be redeemed from the power of past glory  
and renewed in the power of the Holy Spirit.  
Lord, hear us.

*All:* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For ourselves,  
in this community of faith,  
surrounded by people whose journey we have not travelled,  
whose depth of faith we do not know,  
whose potentials we cannot imagine,  
that we might somehow know we belong to each other.  
Lord, hear us.

*All:* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

And before you leave the cross,  
and we vacate this space of worship,  
if there is one of your family  
for whom we should care more fondly,  
direct our gaze to them,  
as you turned Mary towards John.

*All:* **Amen**

*Silence*

THE FOURTH WORD:  
**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me**

*Leader:* Lord Jesus,  
by your cry of desperate honesty,  
rid us of superficial faith which is afraid of the dark.  
Not so that we might be justified pessimists,  
but so that we might discover profound joy,  
give us, when we need it, the courage to doubt,  
to rage, to question, to rail against heaven,  
until we know we are heard.

We do not ask for easy answers to hard times;  
there are many who can offer these.

We ask for a sense of your solidarity,  
that will be enough to let us know  
that we do not walk or cry alone;  
that will enable us to go through the dark  
and find light again in the morning.

*All:* **Amen**

*Silence*

THE FIFTH WORD:  
**I am thirsty**

*Leader:* You have made us for yourself.  
We know it, even if we cannot name it.  
We have had these bodies and these minds long enough  
to learn to live with our limitations.  
Yet despite this, something in us hankers, yearns,  
thirsts for something better, something greater  
which we know is there.

We think deeply or feel deeply  
and wish that this sense of being caught up in living  
would not be interrupted by the mundane things of life.

We sense the disappointment  
in dashed hopes that deserve to be fulfilled,  
in missed opportunities  
which should have led to joy not frustration,  
in people whose potential has been buried or denied  
and deserves to flourish.

So thank you for this incompleteness,  
thank you for this yearning,  
thank you for this thirst.  
Thank you for giving us enough of you to want more,  
and so to sense the fullness of eternity  
within the limits of time.

*All:* **Amen**

*Silence*

THE SIXTH WORD:  
**It is finished**

*Leader:* Now, Lord Jesus, you can let go of us.  
You have convinced us of your way  
and have engaged us on it.  
You have shown us a foretaste of heaven  
and have made us members of its commonwealth.  
You can let go of us now.  
Having overcome the sin of the world,  
death will be a small obstacle.

Just as you foretold  
that you would be handed over to be crucified  
and this has come true; also  
as you foretold, on the third day you will rise again.  
And we will be your witnesses.

*All:* **Amen.**

*Silence*

THE SEVENTH WORD  
**Father, into your hands I commit my spirit**

*Leader:* Go, silent friend,  
your life has found its ending.

To dust returns your weary mortal frame.  
God, who before birth,  
called you into being,  
now calls you back,  
his accent still the same.

Lord Jesus, we let you go.  
You have convinced us of our sin  
and you have forgiven it.

You cannot cling to life for ever,  
nor can we cling to a dying frame,  
nor do we grudge you  
that peace which passeth understanding  
which you have promised us.

So go to heaven,  
where you will welcome those who die in your faith,  
whose death, with your death, we remember.

Tell them that we love them,  
that we miss them, that they are not forgotten.

And cheered by the prospect of a day  
when there will be no more death or parting,  
and all shall be well, and all shall be one,  
may they who have died before us  
be among the first to welcome us to heaven  
where, with you enthroned in glory,  
and in the company of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
and all the saints,  
we will share the everlasting feast of your family.

'Til then, keep us in faith,  
fill us with hope,  
deepen us through love,  
to the glory of your holy name.

*All:*

**Amen.**