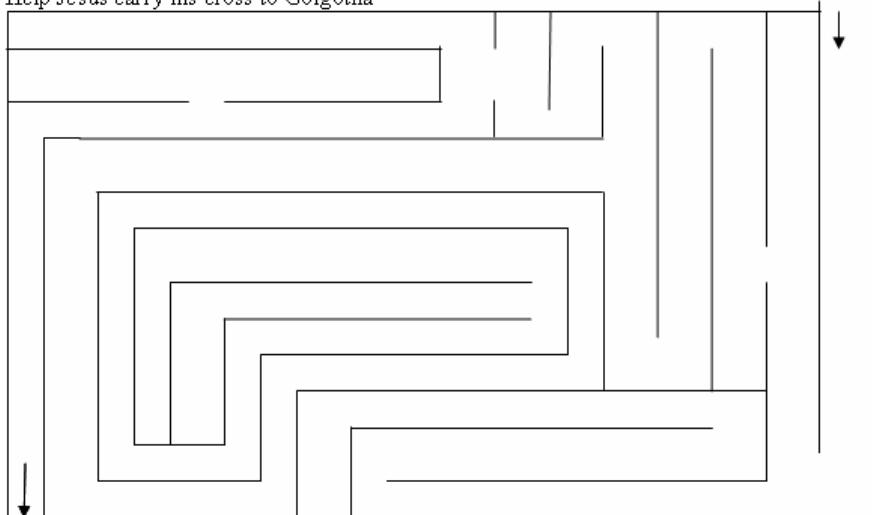


## James & Benjamin's Maze

Help Jesus carry his cross to Golgotha

Start



Finish



**Benjamin's verse:** By this time it was noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until 3:00. The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the thick veil hanging in the Temple was torn apart. [Luke 23 44-45 NLT](#). I chose this verse because it shows me how powerful God really is.

**James' verse:** These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, "Not one of his bones will be broken,"\* and "They will look on him whom they pierced."\*[John 20 36-37 NLT](#). I chose this verse because it shows that God had planned Jesus' death before the world had been even created!

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**Maynooth Community Church**  
**Weekly Lenten Reflections**



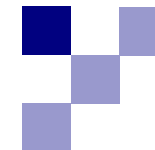
**Journey To The Cross:**

**What Are You Taking Up?**

**Week 5: The Crucifixion**

# Lenten Reflections

Photograph: Ciara Mitchel



As part of your reflection this week, you might like to read this poem, one of “The Terrible Sonnets” by Gerard Manley Hopkins. Hopkins was a manic depressive but he felt his despair most strongly when he could not experience God’s closeness. Hopkins’ darkness was indeed “terrible”; for him a long “light’s delay”. Here, he identifies with those “lost” whose self-focus leaves them with nothing but their “sweating selves”. But even in his dark isolation, Hopkins accepts the will of God. His depression would pass and he would find again the Joy of experiencing the all pervading sense of God’s presence.

*I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day.  
 What hours, O what black hours we have spent  
 This night! What sights, you, heart, saw; ways you went!  
 And more must, in yet longer light’s delay.  
 With witness I speak this. But where I say  
 Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament is  
 Cries countless, cries like dead letters sent  
 To dearest him that lives alas! away.  
 I am gall, I am heartburn. God’s most deep decree  
 Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;  
 Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.  
 Self yeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see  
 The lost are like this, and their scourge to be  
 As I am mine, their sweating selves but worse.*

(Read also “God’s Grandeur” to see Hopkins’ joy)



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 www.creationism.org/imagery  
 Job 24:44-45: And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

**Bible Reading:**

Mark 15

**Reflection:**

I rarely read about Jesus’ death and crucifixion without experiencing sadness. Jesus, the Son of man was tortured, mocked, spat on, stripped of everything but his loin cloth, degraded, branded a common criminal and sentenced to a horrific agonising death. How do I even begin to come to terms with the physical and emotional suffering he endured for me and because of me?

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”<sup>v34</sup>

I have often thought that this was Jesus at his most human and most vulnerable. The world had turned to darkness: Jesus was isolated from that sinless part of himself that is God, his Father. It was a journey into the darkness of hell that Jesus had to make alone. It should have been our journey– to have been flung far from the Father’s sight. Yet Jesus endured that too for us: that sense of abandonment, the loneliness and isolation of all our darkest moments.

What are your feelings as you read Jesus’ words? Perhaps some deep part of us all can identify with the anguish of Jesus’ cry: this feeling of being overwhelmed by circumstance so that we feel “God forsaken”. Yet the irony is that we will never ever be “God forsaken”.

The crucifixion reminds us of God’s amazing love. Life brings sadness and suffering, dark days when we feel distant from God but God’s love never forsakes us. Like the women who watched Jesus die, we too must sometimes wait for the morning, for the light to break into our darkness.

**What I’m taking up?**

I try to read my Bible regularly and I love to let part of it sit with me , so I can talk to God about it– ask for his input. I carry it in my head for a few days, working out what it meant when it was written: how it speaks to me. It’s exciting when God talks through his Word.

- Laurene