

## Lent Reflections on the Stained-Glass Windows



**‘The Hidden Window’  
Good Friday**





**Reading:** Luke 2: 34, 35, Mark 15:33-39, John 19:25 -27

Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, ‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.’

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, ‘Listen,

he is calling for Elijah.’ And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, ‘Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.’ Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was God’s Son!’

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

## **Commentary**

In 1925 a Lady Chapel was created at St Michael’s when the organ was raised to loft level in the church. This window was erected the following year, on the east wall, with a design of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It has, above her, a heart pierced by a sword, a reference to the words of Simeon in one of our readings today.

Mary is represented with the Holy Family in a rustic setting, within a walled garden including a hay-filled manger and some rabbits playing around them. The motto ‘Sapiens qui vigilat’ – ‘wise are those who

watch'-is inscripted below. The window is now no longer on view because of the return of the new organ to the ground floor space.

## **Meditation**

The Medieval Christmas Carol 'In dulci jubilo' contain these lines as translated by J. M Neale, the founder of our local convent.

Good Christian men, rejoice,  
With heart, and soul, and voice;  
Now ye hear of endless bliss:  
Jesus Christ was born for this!  
He has opened the heav'nly door,  
And man is blessed forevermore.

**Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!**

The truth of these words are realised on Good Friday and bring us to the foot of the Cross along with Mary, John and the other women. We watch the Saviour suffer and die.

When Mary saw the spear piercing the side of her Son (John 19:34) she may well have heard the words of the aged Simeon return to her, that her Child would be a sword of great sorrow which would pierce her heart. 'Christ was born for this!'

As this window is hidden, so is much suffering in world hidden, private, disguised, secret.

Let us keep some time in silence praying for all those for who this is true, as we contemplate the death of Christ and all those who this day watch their loved ones suffer and die.

The ancient hymn Stabat Mater (Mother standing at the foot of the Cross) takes us to the heart of her grief.

At the Cross her station keeping,  
stood the mournful Mother weeping,  
close to her Son to the last.

Through her heart, His sorrow sharing,  
all His bitter anguish bearing,  
now at length the sword has passed.

O how sad and sore distressed  
was that Mother, highly blest,  
of the sole-begotten One.

Christ above in torment hangs,  
she beneath beholds the pangs  
of her dying glorious Son.

Is there one who would not weep,  
whelmed in miseries so deep,  
Christ's dear Mother to behold?

Can the human heart refrain  
from partaking in her pain,  
in that Mother's pain untold?

## **Prayer**

Today I kneel in silent adoration of You, my God. I sit quietly, beholding the great mystery of our faith. I behold God, beaten, bruised, mocked, tortured and killed. But in this act, I see all grace and Mercy flowing from Your wounded Heart. Bathe the world in Your Mercy, dear Lord. Cover us with Your grace and draw us to new life through Your death. Hold in your love all who are in pain and suffering this day. We ask this in the name of our Crucified Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen