

Good Friday Service April 2, 2021

Hymn 172, stanzas 1-2

*Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh!
Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified by Lord?*

*Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
Oh!
Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?*

Let us pray together.

Almighty God we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck him in the face.

Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him" When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, “Crucify! Crucify!” But Pilate answered, “You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.”

The Jews insisted. “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the son of God.”

When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. “Where do you come from?” he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. “Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said, “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?”

Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”

From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposed Caesar.”

When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge’s seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement. It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour.

“Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” “Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked. “We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priest answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull, which is called Golgotha. Here they crucified him, and with him two others – one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priest of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write

'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews. Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it."

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Homily – The Rev. Charles Rowins

Invitation

Dear People of God: Our heavenly Father sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved; that all who believe in him might be delivered from the power of sin and earth, and become heirs with him of everlasting life. We pray, therefore, for people everywhere according to their needs.

Let us pray for the holy Catholic Church of Christ throughout the world, that God will confirm his Church in faith, increase it in love, and preserve it in peace.

Silence

Let us pray for all nations and people of the earth, and for those in authority among them, that by God's help they may seek justice and truth, and live in peace and concord.

Silence

Let us pray for all who suffer and are afflicted in body or in mind, that God in his mercy will comfort and relieve them, and grant them the knowledge of his love, and stir up in us the will and patience to minister to their needs.

Silence

Let us pray for all who have not received the Gospel of Christ, that God will open their hearts to the truth, and lead them to faith and obedience.

Silence

As Jesus taught us, we now pray ...

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

Give us this day our daily bread.

*And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.*

*And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*

*For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

Hymn 172, stanzas 3-4

Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Oh!

Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble,

Were you there when they pierced him in the side?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Oh!

Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble,

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

The Dismissal

Go in peace, in thanksgiving for the sacrifice of our Lord and the new life that his sacrifice makes possible.

Thanks be to God.

Good Friday Homily 2021

Good Friday is a day of Sacrifice. It's the day we remember Jesus dying slowly on a cross because he dared to fulfill the task that his Father, our Father, had given him.

That dual identity – his Father and our Father – is a mystery in itself. Sometimes it's hard to see that Jesus of Nazareth and we have something, anything, in common. Maybe carpentry. Maybe ethnic identity. Maybe fishing. Maybe teaching. Maybe healing. Maybe accepting a tough assignment. Why, maybe we have quite a lot in common with Jesus.

Including we are born, we live, we die, and we leave some kind of footprint for those who follow. Jesus certainly left a huge footprint when he died. So huge that the authorities who crucified him couldn't contain him. Within a very short time the buried Christ rose from the dead.

Now, when we think of our footprint, whatever it might be, it certainly won't be comparable to that of Jesus. But we will leave something, and pondering that probability, that certainty, is something that we will all do in this life. Maybe we're doing it right now. Maybe it's simply part of being human.

As the Son of God, Jesus was more than human. He was fully man, yes, but also fully God. God incarnate. God in human flesh. You and I don't have that pedigree, but we have a lot more of God in us than we give God credit for or ourselves credit for.

And maybe, thinking about the blessing of God within us rather than simply the agony of the Crucifixion, is worth some contemplative time. Think about the potential of such contemplation. If we believe that God is within us in some manner, maybe we'll take better care of ourselves. And maybe we'll take better care of others. And of the Creation itself. There is all sort of value in giving credence to the God within us.

The final words of Jesus, as the cross took its toll, reinforces this value of being in a relationship with God. "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Not just hopeful, but confident. "I know where I came from, I know why I have been here, and I know where I am going."

The Father to whom Jesus uttered his final words is our Father. The whole life of Christ is in some manner our life. And it's not just a life past, but a new life, a life right now, as we speak, and a life to experience, when our time comes.

Yes, Good Friday is about the death of Jesus, but it is about so much more, including about each of us. We're in there somewhere, somehow. It's not always easy to see where and how, but it is always important to believe that there is a where and a how. Thanks to the same God who there are at the birth of Christ and at his death. God the Father never left God the Son, and, thanks to God the Holy Spirit, God the Father never leaves you and me.

Sadness is never the whole coin. There is another side, the side of victory over death, which we will observe and celebrate on Easter. So, yes, today think sadness, but never, ever without hope. The God who, as Jesus, suffered on the Cross, is The God who, as Jesus, will visit Mary at the empty tomb, and assure her, he does us, that "I am alive and well and will be with you always, even in your darkest hour. "With you" - that's the Way it is meant to be and will be."

Amen.