

Good Friday - The Passion of the Mystical Body - Church - 2020

Today is Good Friday, the second day of the Holy Week Triduum.

We are here to celebrate the Passion and Death of Our Savior, Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

On Good Friday in 2002 and 2004, I was climbing the Holy Stairs in Rome, the very stairs that Jesus went up to be interrogated by Pontius Pilate and the same stairs, He descended to receive His Cross. On those Good Fridays, we went up the stairs on our knees and saw two spots of blood believed to be the blood of Christ. It was a humbling and moving experience. After descending the stairs in 2002, we also attended the Good Friday Liturgy at the Basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, in Rome. During the veneration of the cross, as I bent to kiss the Cross, I was shocked to see crucifix contained large pieces of True Cross. Earlier, I had seen the same crucifix behind bullet-proof glass in the reliquary, along with a part of the Crown of Thorns, one of the nails of crucifixion that had pierced Our Lord's flesh. We also saw the entire sign of Jesus' guilt that was nailed on the cross. What an incredible moving and spiritual experience. In 2000, we attended the Good Friday Liturgy in a filled St. Peter's Basilica with now Saint John Paul the Great. Although those three Good Fridays were the most remarkable and memorable, I have celebrated Good Friday for most of my 74 years and I have been in the Sanctuary for most of the last 65 years. All those Liturgies were well-attended.

Now, here I am today. There are ??? people here. Yet, even with only ??? people here, there are still ??? more than there were Apostles standing at the foot of the Cross with Mary.

All of you are not here because of all the restrictions in place to mitigate the contagion of the Covid -19 virus. I have talked with many of you during this time. You have expressed a great longing for the Mass and especially for Our Lord's Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in Holy Eucharist. It was painful, yet uplifting, for me to hear you express your desire, your passion for Jesus. My youngest daughter was even crying about it when I spoke with her on the phone.

Your painful longing immediately brought to my mind, Our Lord's *whispered cry* from the cross shortly before His Death, "***I Thirst!***"

Jesus was truly thirsting for drink. Renown doctors and pathologists have written that "thirst" is by far the worst, the most painful, torture of crucifixion. Jesus experienced a thirst beyond our understanding, yet, there was another thirst as well.

Remember when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane.

- ◆ He went off to pray. He took upon Him all of our sins.
- ◆ The sins of every person - from the sin of Adam and Eve to His present day.
- ◆ All the sins that would be committed in the future,
- ◆ All our sins and the sins of our children and grandchildren to come.
- ◆ All of them.
- ◆ Sin is contrary to the very Nature of God.
- ◆ The weight of this caused such great stress that it broke down the capillaries in Our Lord's skin and He began to sweat blood.
- ◆ Jesus went to see His disciples and found them all asleep.
- ◆ He returned to pray. He, then, saw His Passion before Him. He experienced tremendous anguish in seeing this. He sweat more blood.
- ◆ He returned to His disciples who were still asleep.
- ◆ For the third time, He returned to pray. This time, He looked down through the ages and saw all the multitude of people who, even after all the Love God was showing them and all the suffering of the

Son, these people would still choose to offend Him without remorse and even persecute those who did repent and love God.

- ◆ Jesus was still in the Garden, yet His Heart was already crucified.
- ◆ Droplets of blood soaked the ground beneath Him. Jesus could have died right then.

Going back to the Cross near the three o'clock hour, when Jesus said, "I Thirst," He was thirsting for souls, all souls, especially those in most need of His Mercy.

Jesus Loves us! That is why He created us.

God has loved us from all eternity. God knew us and everything about us from all eternity. We were God's thoughts. Just think of that; we were God's thoughts. And at our conception, God gave His beloved thoughts a body and a soul. An intellect to know Him and a will, a free will, to chose to love Him as well.

This is why we were created: to be Loved by God and to love Him in return.

To know Him, to Love Him and to be happy with Him in this life and have perfect felicity with Him for all eternity in the next life.

To experience that, **we must choose**. It is our choices that will determine our personal eternity.

It will not be our intelligence, our state in life, our beauty, our wealth, our power. No, only our choices.

Today, we see the Church suffering it's Way of the Cross, it's Passion, today and all around us.

- ★ The Church is suffering its Passion in different ways in different parts of the World:
- ★ We are in the Garden of Gethsemane
- ★ Jesus was betrayed by His own Apostle.
- ★ The Church is betrayed by many, including it's own prelates
- ★ The entire Mystical Body is suffering from this.
- ★ Jesus was put on trial in front of the Sanhedrin, accused falsely, beaten and blasphemed against.

The Mystical Body is being tried everywhere.

- If we even disagree with the ideological perversions of the world's liberal views, we are punished.
- If we stand up for Christian marriage, human sexuality as ordained by God, we are punished.
- In England and Canada (and America to lesser degree) we are fined and imprisoned for not embracing the worlds gender and sexual mores.
- In Europe we are mocked and spit upon and discriminated against. Jesus was scourged beyond a person's capacity to survive. He was wrongly condemned to die, made to carry His Cross on the Way to Calvary where He was nailed to that Cross and died.
- The Mystical Body is being scourged, condemned to die and execution, sometimes even crucified in many countries around the world.
- In Islamic countries it is a capital crime to be Christian. In some African countries, like Nigeria, Churches are being set on fire and bombed - during Mass. The Church in China is being systematically persecuted.

How will we, each of us respond to this persecution? How will we when it's even worse?

What choices do we make.

We can decide if we want **to believe** Our Lord and follow Him, or Not!

God **IS** Truth!

We can decide to ignore the Truth, or we can decide to disobey the Truth.

But, contrary to popular opinion, **we cannot decide "What is True!"**

The Truth has already been decided!

God, the Author of all Truth, has decided that from the very beginning.

But that is the problem today, isn't it!

We think that with our enlightened minds, we can decide what is True! We cannot!

But today, we have ideologues everywhere:

in the government, in the media, in entertainment and in our universities.

We all ask the same question as Pontius Pilate, "What is Truth?" And then like Pilate...

When we hear the truth, **WE decide** whether it is really the truth after all - or not.

Let's look at the choices made on Holy Thursday and Good Friday, and think of our choices..

- **Judas:** chose to betray Christ, his friend, the Son of God, for financial gain. He traded the Author of Life's life for 30 pieces of silver.
- **Christ** responded with a "look of love," Judas chose despair and suicide.
- In the Garden, **Jesus** chose to follow His Father's Will, instead of His own human will.
- **Peter:** chose to deny Christ out of fear and "political correctness."
- **Christ** responded with a look of love,"
- **Peter** responded with tears, sorrow and remorse.
- **The Jewish Leaders:** the religious leaders, Jesus didn't meet their expectations of what **they decided** the Savior should be. They chose to deny Him, to seek Jesus' death by lying and accusing Him of blasphemy and later insurrection.
- **Caiaphas:** The Chief Priest, who should have been Christ's greatest ally and a future saint. Instead, he chose to remain in power and to deny Christ, His authority, and to deny the Father in order to maintain **their status quo**.
- **Pilate:** He wanted the Truth and accepted the "truth" until it became politically expedient to deny the **very author of that Truth**. He had Christ scourged in order to win over the temple leaders while saving Christ's life. But when it wasn't enough, he chose to knowingly sentence the innocent creator of Life to death to maintain his career.
- **Herod:** the King of Hollywood, he wanted Jesus to entertain him and his guests with a miracle or two. When Jesus refused, Herod declared Jesus to be insane and irrelevant and sent Him back to Pilate in the garment of the insane.
- **The executioners:** they chose to beat and torture Our Lord to near death for thrills.
- **The Crowd:** They could have turned everything around, they could've chosen to spare Jesus, instead they chose a true insurrectionist and a convicted murder, Barabbas, over their Savior, and demanded that Jesus be crucified.
- **Veronica:** She chose to brave the hostile crowd and the danger of being beaten by the soldiers in order to offer the consoling act of wiping Jesus' face.
- **Simon, the Cyrenian:** Chose to give up his comfort and assist Our Lord in carrying His cross.
- **Bad thief:** Had everything to gain and nothing to lose, yet, he chose to join the crowd who had crucified Jesus and mocked Our Lord.
- **The Good Thief:** On the other hand, chose to defend Christ and asked for Christ's remembrance in His kingdom. Now he's **St. Dismas**.
- **St. John:** Chose to follow Jesus to the very end while risking his own life in the process.
- **The Apostles:** most of them chose to watch from a safe distance.
- **Our Lady:** Chose to offer Her own Son and her own soul in union with Jesus in His suffering as our Co-Redemptrix.
- **Jesus** chose to forgive those who crucified Him and all sinners.
- **St. Longinus:** Followed orders by piercing Our Lord's heart, but chose to accept the graces offered to him by Our Lord. He became a Christian, a bishop and a saint.

All but six of these persons: denied Jesus and aided in His death. **They decided** - He was not the Messiah they wanted. He was not the warrior king, the mighty ruler. He disappointed them. He lost His popularity. They began to hate Him. They chose to kill Him. They decided that He was not who they wanted for their king; so, instead, they choose Caesar as their king. They did not want the **real Messiah**, but the Messiah of their own making who would fulfill **their desires**; for power, riches and comfort. Instead of choosing the "Source of all Life," **they chose Barabbas**, a convicted murderer.

We face the same choices in our own lives

- We can accept the real Jesus for who He really is, follow Him, and stand with Him,
- or we can reject Him when we feel when His message is too hard or too unpopular.
- We can decide if we want to believe Him or
- We can rely on our **sophisticated and enlightened** minds and we can decide "**what is truth**" ourselves.

If we decide that abortion is, "sort-of alright" for rape victims, or in developing and over-populated countries, or in other certain circumstances...

If we decide that same-sex couples have a God-given right to marriage and that it's OK!

If we decide that Birth Control and abortifacients are alright - especially in our own personal circumstances, then, "**are we or are we not, choosing Barabbas?**"

When we choose political correctness or expediency or "unqualified" tolerance, then **are we not** acting like Pilate, like the Jewish leaders, like the crowd.

Are we not choosing **Caesar as our King**,
And are we not crying out, "**Crucify Him!**"

And when we **do choose wrongly**, are we like Judas, or are we like Peter?

When we suffer on our own cross, do we curse like the bad thief, or ask God for help?

Do we **give up** or do we **get to** Reconciliation and choose to follow Christ again?

Today, if we choose to "go with the flow" **simply because** it's politically correct, or because we don't want to be judged as "**intolerant,**" how **will we ever** have the courage to choose "to go against the flow" when our livelihood, our health or our freedom will be at stake?

The early Christians gave their life before they would offer incense to the emperor's statue. Today, some Christians **approve** the sacrifice the lives of the unborn rather than be called "**unenlightened.**"

How will we choose on th Good Friday of the Mystical Body, the Church?

From today, until Easter, you can see that all the tabernacles of the world are **empty**, and all the altars are **bare**.

- It is a reminder of the sacrifice of our Lord, of the **emptiness** that would have been in each of our hearts had Jesus abandoned us in our sin.
- But he **didn't** abandon us.

And so, when we receive Jesus today in Spiritual Holy Communion,

- let us make our **hearts** into his tabernacles,
- let us make our **hearts** into his altars,
- let us make our **hearts** into his thrones,

SO that between now and Easter Jesus has a place to stay on earth,
and when Jesus, says today from the Cross, ***“I thirst”*** let Him look down through the ages and see that we,
too, say, ***“We thirst for you, too, Jesus!”***