

Homily - Good Friday of the Lord's Passion

Deacon Joe

As we contemplate Our Lord crucified today, we behold two tragedies. The first tragedy is the tragedy of abandoning our Lord, first by Judas and then by Peter and the other Apostles.

This abandonment might invite us to consider how we have abandoned our Lord in our everyday life. Or what we need to abandon in our life, our life style, in our thinking or in our behavior to be near Christ all the time.

Let us take that into our prayer today.

The bigger tragedy of course, is the tragedy of an innocent man publicly executed. Jesus' only "crime" was to identify himself as the Messiah, and that's who He was; He did so to the Sanhedrin, so they decided to have Him killed, and He did so to Pilate, who sentenced Him to death. **Yet, He went like a lamb to the slaughter.**

What we see in the crucifixion and the cross is the truth. The truth, the truth to which Jesus had testified all along.

If the execution of a guilty man doesn't give us remorse (and it should, since it presents a failure of all society, not just the criminal), the execution of an innocent man should. This tragedy is even more profound when we gaze upon the Crucified One and remember that we should have been on that Cross instead of him.

An innocent man is dying, brutalized on the Cross, for us. Adam and Eve's Fall and our sins incurred the death penalty. After all God has given us and done for us; we've repaid him by turning our backs on him, again and again. Even in his last words, Jesus asks the Father to forgive us for our ignorance.

Today is a day **not to dwell on the tragedy** we inflicted on the good God who came to save us, **but the love with which He did**. Let us die to sin and turn back to God and back to love.

It is difficult for us to see or even imagine the flood of love that pours off the cross. **A love that we are called to live.**

Today is also a day to unite ourselves with the suffering Christ. Those who suffer draw comfort and strength by having someone accompany them in their suffering. We accompany Christ in his suffering today, but He also accompanies us in ours.

Whether we face great suffering, and I know many of you do and are, or the little complaints of life, Christ shows us on the Cross that we'll never suffer alone. Let's also accompany Christ today in anyone we know who is suffering.

And finally

This afternoon Jesus is on the Cross. If anyone has hurt me, if I think anyone owes me something, if I think anyone has done me wrong, Our Lord on the Cross is ready to pay that debt in full.

If I have hurt anyone, if I owe anyone anything, if I think I have done something wrong to someone, Our Lord on the Cross is ready to help me pay that debt.

Jesus is on the Cross today to reconcile us with Our Heavenly Father and with each other. Let's be reconciled to God by reconciling today with anyone who owes us and with anyone to whom we are indebted.