

Homily. Solemn Commemoration of the Lord's Passion. 7th April 2023.

As I did last night at Holy Thursday's Mass of the Lord's Supper, but now with different faces gathered for a very different commemoration, I ask; What are we hearing here this afternoon? What are we seeing right now?

Of course, we notice Jesus, a good, completely innocent man who helped people and spoke God's truth to them, being hauled off for trial. We're alert to the sham of this scene, to his unwarranted condemnation to death on trumped up charges, all because being true to God and himself inflamed the jealousies of the powerful and elite. We see mother Mary, a few other women and John the disciple standing by his cross, noting that his other friends and followers had deserted him in fear for their own lives.

We hear Jesus saying with his final breath that it was all accomplished, all finished and see him bow his head as he gave over his spirit to God. We watch as his side was pierced open, with blood and water flowing out. Next, we observe some good people going to Governor Pilate to claim him for burial, preparing his body, then sealing him in a rock tomb before night fell. After that, we notice that only silence in the darkness remains.

This is what the witnesses on that sad Friday heard and saw, but we see and hear more because, from our place in time after the resurrection, we know what they couldn't; That the tomb wasn't the end of this story at all. What you and I are witnessing now is the dying and death of the Son of God for us and for the life of the world. It's God's heart that's been torn open up for us, issuing forth the water of Baptismal new birth and the blood that frees us from our sins, fears and the darkness of eternal death.

Mary, his mother, was given not only to John the beloved disciple, but to us today as our consolation and friend on our journey of faith through life. Moreover, in our Lord Jesus final surrender to the Father we see the God of the universe lovingly surrender everything for our salvation. That's why this Friday out of all Friday's is the Good one, for it shows us God's thoughts and feelings for us; God's absolute and total loving sacrifice of self for us that has the power to change our minds and hearts about God.

Very soon we'll be praying for the world, then we'll venerate the Cross and all that it means; God's passionate loving of you, of me and of all. This costly gift is given so that we might be free to be who we really are and to live accordingly every day as God's chosen sons and daughters in the Son of God, our brother who is always loving us into the fullness of life. But, as you realise, that real ending of Good Friday is a story awaiting us for telling at tomorrow's night's Holy Vigil and in the bright light of Easter Sunday.