

Good Friday homily 2024 – “A lot has happened”

A lot has happened since supper yesterday. The meal with our Lord was interrupted, first by our colleague Judas who left the supper early, and then by soldiers who arrived suddenly and took our Lord away. We haven't seen him since, but we understand that he was presented to Pilate, who, after an interrogation, pronounced the death penalty by crucifixion.

The same penalty that murderers receive. What behavior merits such a sentence? Whom has Jesus hurt? He hasn't done any harm. He heals, not hurts. But now he is going to hurt a lot.

And we will too. We don't know yet how much the pain for us will be. Perhaps nothing if we go away quietly. But we know what the pain for Jesus will be. We have seen others crucified, and it's not a pretty sight. It wouldn't be right for us to just fade away.

But, is that what Jesus would want us to do? He dies. We live. Is that what all of this is about? He gives his life for us. And we just fade away? That will haunt us for as long as we live. We didn't fight for our friend. We didn't intervene. He would have intervened for us, and all we can do is watch as he dies slowly on a cross? It's not right.

Which, as we know, was true. The crucifixion wasn't right. Jesus didn't deserve to die. He was a teacher and a healer. And he helped us see, by his own life and death, that service, not subservience, is where true joy to be found.

But Jesus wasn't done. He had more to say. He didn't just give his life. His Father, and our Father, restored that life. That restoration, that Resurrection, would come fairly quickly, in a manner of days. How could that be? Unless, Jesus and the Father were One, are One.

Wow. This is just too much to process. Well above our paygrade. Or is it? Maybe the death of Jesus is not an isolated event. Maybe it is part of a larger event that includes being raised from the dead. Is that possible? Who would believe that?

Yes, who would believe that? Well, people did. Just a few at first, but as word spread and as Jesus himself, risen from the dead, appeared to others, faith in God's love was restored and shared over many centuries. Why, twenty centuries later, people all over the world attest to the Risen Christ.

But they also remember the agony of his death. We don't get Easter without Good Friday. We don't skip the Cross. We acknowledge the pain that the Cross represents. Jesus experienced the whole package of events. The disciples experienced the whole package. And we do too.

And today we're right in the middle of that package. We had a last supper with the Lord. Today we watch him die. And, if all goes as God has promised, and as the Church has proclaimed for many centuries, we will once again be with the Risen Lord.

Unbelief tried really, really hard to crush our Faith. The forces of Evil thought they had won. But God had other ideas. **And you don't mess with God on the Weekend. It might not look good on Friday. But just wait until Sunday!**

Amen.