

Good Friday – Year B

Courageous, determined, passionate, humble, obedient, and selfless. These are just some of the words that capture the heart of Jesus. Today, on this Good Friday, we join with Christians throughout the world and walk with Jesus in his suffering and death. Together we witness and behold the courage, determination, passion, humility, obedience, and selflessness of Jesus, the Son of God, who came not to be served but to serve.

This service by Jesus becomes an excruciatingly painful journey marked by condemnation, betrayal, denial, suffering, and death on a cross. As we embrace this journey with Jesus, our human hearts well up with feelings of horror, shame, and guilt. The prophet Isaiah offers an explanation for these feelings in today's first reading.

“Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured... But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins.... We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way, but the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all.”

That is why, my dear brothers and sisters, today is a Good Friday. Because of his courage, determination, passion, humility, obedience, and selflessness Jesus overcomes evil with good. The innocent victim becomes the holy victor. The cross, a brutal instrument of death, becomes a vehicle of new life, and all are recipients of this life – the rich and poor, the orphaned and homeless, the single and widowed, married and divorced, incarcerated and free, sick and healthy, believers and non-believers, young and old, and you and me.

In a few moments with the help of those seeking full communion with the Church I will carry the Cross into the Church. And all of us will have the opportunity to venerate it. As we adore the cross with the touch of our lips or hands or the glance of our eyes, may we be reminded of and encouraged by God's great love for us, who loved us so much he sent his only begotten son to suffer and die so that we might have life. In the face of our aloneness and insecurities let us behold this love. Let us strive to embrace the crosses in our own lives with the courage, determination, passion, humility, obedience, and selflessness of Jesus. For the Cross does not have to be just an instrument of death. It can also become a vehicle of new life in which we become one with Jesus.