

## GOOD FRIDAY GOSPEL REFLECTION

From St John's point of view, the Cross is not merely an instrument of torture but a throne on which sits not a defeated man but a victorious one. The Cross is seen as an object of veneration. That doesn't mean his sufferings are downplayed in any way.

In the fourth Gospel Jesus is conscious of his pre-existence. Through death, therefore, he is returning to a state he has temporarily left during his stay in this world. Jesus is not seen as a victim at the mercy of his opponents since he has freely chosen to lay down his life with the utter certitude that he will take it up again. Jesus freely goes to His execution. Satan has no power over Him. Are we confident in our faith when it is being tested by events outside our control? Has Satan any influence over us.

In John Jesus is not surprised by Judas and the arresting party. He's actually expecting Him. Judas has already rejected Jesus, the Light of the world. So, when he and the arresting party come to seize Jesus they are forced to use man-made artificial light - lanterns and torches, which are unreliable and can go out at any time. The Light which Jesus affords his followers will never go out unless we, like Judas, consciously extinguish it. Have we ever helped people who have been in a dark place.

Jesus now comes before the Roman governor. It is Pilate, not Jesus, who is on trial to see whether he stands by the Truth or not. Pilate has no power over Jesus unless it was already permitted by God. It is not Jesus who fears Pilate but the other way round. His wife even cautions him to be wary of this man. The real question is not what will happen to Jesus but whether Pilate will betray himself by bowing to the unjust demands of the people he is supposed to govern. Have we ever buried the truth when it became uncomfortable to face or 'washed our hands' of thorny situations.

Jesus was crucified at noon and died at 3pm. It was roughly at this time that lambs were being slaughtered in the temple precincts for the Jewish Paschal meal that Friday evening which commemorated their delivery from the evil King Pharaoh a thousand years before. By shedding His blood, Christ, delivers us from the clutches of our ancient enemy and offers us freedom from the slavery of sin.

St Andrew of Crete says:

- If there had been no Cross the record of our sins would not have been cancelled and Paradise, forfeited by our First Parents would not have been regained.
- If there had been no Cross, death would not have been trodden underfoot;
- If there had been no the Cross the Prince of Darkness would still have dominance over man.

That is why today is known as Good Friday. 'The tree of man's defeat become his tree of victory'