

Good Friday

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by

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Today, the Church calls us to prayerfully consider our Lord's death and its meaning for us. There is no room for morbid grief. In fact, there are even moments in the Good Friday service when our joy and gratitude cannot be held back and must be expressed. Without our Lord's death on the cross, there would be no joy and hope on Easter.

The Liturgy of the Word begins our worship service by inviting us to be responsive to the proclamation of the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ our Savior. The scripture readings for Good Friday allow us once again to contemplate the cross and the one crucified.

In the reading from the Prophet Isaiah the servant is described as despised and rejected, bearing grief and carrying sorrow and making himself an offering for our sins. In the Letter to the Hebrews Jesus is described as the great high priest who offers up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears.

In Saint John's Gospel, we see Jesus willingly and without hesitation going towards the cross, which he himself carries. In John's Gospel the weight of the world stands squarely on Jesus' shoulders, a weight he bears alone. Saint John in his description of the Passion shows us that Jesus does not simply undergo his destiny; he chooses it and willingly offers himself as love for His Father and for us. For Saint John, the cross is glory. It is a place of majesty, a tree of life and promise, a tree like the one in Eden, but its fruit now is that of Jesus whose flesh is to be eaten and whose blood is for us to drink.

Today, as we meditate on Jesus's suffering, death and resurrection through our participation in the Passion and death of our Lord, let us ask the Father for the special grace to become more deeply aware of how completely our brother Jesus loves us. Such an awareness can lead us to respond more generously to our loving Savior who is our hope, the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

From the Cross Jesus gave us a living standard for holiness in the person of his Mother, Mary. Many people were near the Cross of Jesus. Some came to jeer, others came out of curiosity, and some, such as the beloved disciple and the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee, were there out of sorrow and love. But only Mary brought to the Cross a sinless heart. Mary had lived her whole life in the presence of the Word made Flesh. Now as Jesus gives up his life to take away the sins of the world, Mary, the mother of God and our Mother was present as the first fruits of Jesus' redemptive love.

Mary encourages us to stand near the Cross so that we too will be cleansed of our sins and drawn into the perfection of our Heavenly Father. Through Mary's example, through her union with us in prayer and through her powerful intercession, we who comprise the church on earth are being purified, transformed, and incorporated into the heavenly Church.

We adore you O Christ and we bless you because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.