

Good Friday

a Biblical reflection from Fr Kevin Walsh, Sydney Australia.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9. John 18:1-19:42.

After Jesus had taken the vinegar, he said: *'It is accomplished!'*

With these words, Jesus gave up his spirit.'

These Words are taken from the Passion of Our Lord according to St. John. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

+ + + + +

I wonder what kind of a Messiah the people in Our Lord's time were really looking for?

Was it a Messiah who would gather an army around him, and drive out the foreign occupation of the Romans?

Could it have been a Messiah, who would restore the ancient tribes of Israel into one community again?

Would it be a Messiah who would spread Israel's Spirituality by force throughout the known world?

The simple answer to all of this is: - NO! None of these.....

From the poverty of the stable in Bethlehem, to the cruelty of Crucifixion, Jesus, the Human face of the Father, was the Messiah who ministered through loving service; not from the stance of power, glory or control; Jesus the radical Son of His Father, Jesus the new *'trend setter'* of loving outreach to the *'poor'* and to those who lived on the fringes of society; this was the Messiah, Jesus the daring Son of the Father, who was not afraid to break traditional Religious rules, if they got in the way of loving unconditionally! Jesus was not tied up and paralysed by Religious Customs which saw God's Governance in black and white terms, and unforgiving practices, which created an image of a cruel God, a power filled God, or an untouchable God. Jesus challenged all those images!

Jesus, through his birth in the stable, and then taking on the status of a Refugee, entered into the mess of this world! A Mess whose answers could not fit into neat tidy boxes of Religion's way of seeing the world, through pompous and arrogant lenses. Jesus, saw the world and its people through the Eyes and Heart of His Father. This way of seeing the world and its people, was new, it was real, it was true, and it was forgiving and loving!

Jesus the Messiah could truly say the opening words of our Homily today.....*'It is accomplished'....*

Can we say with all our heart, *'It is it accomplished'*? If we say YES!!! That means that we are taking the responsibility given to us at our Baptism, to be Christ in our World. The YES that we say, is not like a yes that we would say for a Bucket full of KFC! It is a serious yes! It is a solemn yes! It is a challenging yes! It's an exciting yes!

It is a thrilling yes, because we are not called to take up the Cross daily just by ourselves! We are called to take up *OUR* Cross daily.....that means a community project, not just for now, but for always. Christians are not lone rangers..... we are a Community, we are a group, WE ARE the living Body of Christ. With this 'community strength', we must act 'as one body' in responding to our sisters and brothers in our midst. As a community we must act as one body in our loving outreach to those who are in personal, family, and international difficulty. As a community we are to serve each other like Jesus ministered to His apostles, by washing their feet, prior to celebrating the Passover meal; the meal of Christ's body. We, as a community in Christ, are called to be Foot washers of the Lord! We are not called to be self-centred, or grasping for only that which satisfies us. We are not called to be a community of Christ who has no backbone.... which is courage! We are not called to be a Community who has no wishbone.... which is hope, and above all we are not called to be a community of sad sacks who have no funny bone. We are called to live life to the fullest in every way, and to be strong, to be hopeful and to have a sense of humour and be funny.

Good Friday places the suffering Servant into our minds, hearts, and hands.... Our yes, has the most serious consequences for a life which is open to all that God asks of us. We fail, if we put conditions on our YES to Christ, we pass with flying colours when our Yes to Christ has no conditions. Following the faith response of Mary the Mother of Jesus, Mary the Mother of the Church; our YES, like hers, is open to the endless designs of God for us.

I would like to conclude with a verse from a Song, composed by John Michael Talbot, using the words of the great St Therese....

*Christ has no body now but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which He looks with compassion on this world,
yours are the feet with which He walks to do good.
Yours are the hands with which He blesses all the world.*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

