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Good Friday - 7 April 2023

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7 April 2023

Good Friday

Reflection by Gerard Moore

Introduction

Today's Liturgy begins simply and in silence, with no introduction prior to the Opening Prayer of the presider.

The readings for the Good Friday 3.00 pm service hold together the violent deaths of the innocent and hope in the triumph of grace. As seen in the narrative from John, the death of Jesus is immediately related to his resurrection: in this tradition Jesus is the dying and rising one. The celebration, as a seamless part of the Triduum, is completed in the Easter Vigil. The context of all our listening, reading and preaching the word is the resurrection, hope beyond even violent death. This context allows the faithful to celebrate the Cross.

First Reading

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

The servant grew up amongst the people, was innocent and completely dedicated to the will of God.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 30(31):2, 6, 12-13, 15-17, 25

Father, I put my life in your hands.

Again, we have a psalm where the antiphon is taken from the New Testament (Luke 23:46) that profoundly links the crucifixion to the salvation history that has gone before.

Second Reading

Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9

As priest Jesus hears our petitions and as human understands our needs. As one with God, he brings our prayers to God without fail and with mercy.

Gospel Reading

John 18:1-19:42

Jesus undergoes death but is not controlled by it. The stripping away at the crucifixion is the revelation of his identity.

Reflection

Our readings show we are not involved in a celebration of violence, rather they offer insights into the meaning and application of Jesus' crucifixion. We see this in the poem from Isaiah's suffering servant series. The servant grew up amongst the people, was innocent and completely dedicated to the will of God. There is in the poem a juxtaposition between the violence and disfigurement that he is subjected to as he is killed and the honour and salvation that emerges. The poet relates this oppression and pain to bearing the sins of many as an offering for sin. Within the poem there is a profound theological adjustment for the readers, one that is reminiscent of Job. The onlookers see the punishment of God in the suffering of the servant. The prophet unhooks suffering from divine punishment since in this case the wretched state of affairs breaks that theological model. It is through suffering, once considered due to sin, that God overcomes violence and brings forth a new wisdom. There is a new vision here, one that we may not have fully embraced as yet. It well matches the response to the Psalm: 'Father I put my life in your hands.'

The excerpt from the Letter to the Hebrews allows the Isaiah prophecy to be related to the theology of Jesus as the great high priest. Jesus was innocent and sinless, obedient to death to the will of God, and now is at one with God. As priest he hears our petitions and as human understands our needs. As with God, he brings our prayers to God without fail and with mercy. The reading allows us to connect the death of Jesus to our confidence in grace.

The Gospel is a centrepiece of the liturgy. Two ritual features stand out. It is the only time in the liturgy that the Gospel, or indeed any reading, is read in parts (with exceptions from the Directory for Masses with Children). This allows for some relief given the length of the text and enables a different appreciation of the text. The solemn liturgy calls for a different form of proclaiming and hearing. With this, the Gospel is sung or chanted where possible, again heightening the solemnity of the occasion.

The evangelist offers a complex rendering of the death of Jesus. It is set within the Passover without embracing a strong Passover motif. At heart of the narrative is that Jesus is always in control, freely accepting the will of God. He challenges the authority of his accusers, rebutting the high priests and the Roman overlord. At the moment of his death, he announces the completion of his earthly mission: 'it is finished'. Across the text Jesus undergoes death but is not controlled by it. The stripping away at the crucifixion is the revelation of his identity.

His control stands in contrast to the behaviour of most around him. The religious and political leaders react out of jealousy and fear. Peter denies him, while Joseph and Nicodemus remain secret followers. Only the women with his mother and the beloved disciple are present to the dying man.

The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the Solemn Intercessions taken from the Roman Missal.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Good Friday (7 April 2023)

Title	AOV1	AOV2	CWB	CWBII	GA
Veneration of the Cross					
Behold the wood					333
Behold, the wood of the cross				319	
Behold, behold the wood of the cross				320	
Songs during the people's veneration					
All you who pass this way					331
At the cross her vigil keeping			624	318	
Faithful cross the saints rely on				321	
My people, my people			750		
O Jesus crucified, for us you suffered			770	326	334
The reproaches (ICEL)				323	
The reproaches (Wise)				322	
When I survey the wondrous cross			862	329	330
Communion Hymns					
Adoramus te, Christe				445	305
Behold the cross	105				
Jesus, remember me	152			526	308
My loving Saviour, how have you offended			749		
My song is love unknown				325	
O sacred head, surrounded			776	330	335
Praise to the holiest in the height			791	585	
See his hands		48			
The Lord is now exalted				324	
The royal banners forward go				327	
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?	103			328	336

Title	AOVNG	S&S2
Glory in the cross		313
O sacred head		314
See him	108	
See his love	109	
Song of the cross	116	
Wondrous love		317

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 30: *Father, I put my life in your hands.*

	CWB	GA	JOBF	LPSF	PM
Psalm 30	256	30	pg. 8	pg. 29	pg. 28

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Look at the cross (TT/SYJ) [Veneration of the Cross]

That we might live (TWML) [Veneration of the Cross]