

Since we have begun our intense walk with Jesus this week – here are some words and phrases that have appeared in the Gospel readings.

On Palm Sunday we heard:

-The whole assembly cried out: “We found this man misleading our people; he opposes the payment of taxes to Caesar and maintains that he is the Christ.”

-As Jesus hung on the cross, the people sneered: “He saved others, let him save himself IF he is the chosen one, the Christ of God.”

-Even the soldiers jeered calling out: “If you are the King of the Jews – save yourself!”

-One of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying: “Are you not the Christ? Then save yourself and us!”

-A centurion who witnessed what had happened glorified God and said: “This man was innocent beyond doubt.”

And on Holy Thursday:

-The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over.

-Peter said to him: “you will never wash my feet.”

-Jesus said: “Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so you are clean – but not all.” For he knew who would betray him.

And today, on Good Friday:

-Judas, his betrayer, took a band of soldiers and guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees and went to the garden with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

-Put your sword back into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?

-Then the maid, who was the gatekeeper said to Peter, “You are not one of this man’s disciples – are you?” And Peter said, “I am not.”

-When Jesus spoke to the high priest, one of the temple guards standing there – struck him.

-So Pilate said to him, “then you are king?”

-And the crowd cried out: “Not this one, but Barabbas!” “Hail King of the Jews.” “Crucify him, crucify him!” “If you release him, you are not a friend of Caesar – we have no king but Caesar!”

-They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots.

Just this sampling of words, I think, is enough to show us that Jesus had a sorrowful heart. When a person has a sorrowful heart, they are aware of the fact that they have been hurt, wronged, mistreated, ignored, belittled, forgotten, left-out, betrayed, or disappointed at some point in their lives.

And having this awareness, Jesus strives to dispel the sorrow carried by us in our hearts. And the effect of this action is called: **Mercy.**

Mercy is what happens when someone stands in another person’s shoes – and feels their pain.

At the beginning of every Mass we cry out: Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy.

And before receiving Communion we say:

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world – have mercy on us.

And Jesus does have mercy on us --- and will always have mercy on us --- that’s why he embraced the cross – rather than shunned it.

That’s why he willingly laid his hands upon the wood – instead of fighting it.

That’s why Jesus said, “It is finished.”

And bowing his head, he handed over his spirit.

He willingly handed over his spirit – so that we might have the gift of that same spirit – pulsing within us.

It is his spirit – which gives us life. Gives us courage. Gives us strength – to take up our cross, daily, and follow after Him.

Today, on Good Friday – as Jesus mounts the wood of the cross – he looks upon us with mercy.

And he only asks one thing in return:

To show the same mercy to others. . .

“Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn no, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

(Luke 6:37-38)

Today, on Good Friday, as Jesus mounts the wood of the Cross – he holds nothing back. He looks upon us – with mercy.