

Good Friday 2021

- When Jesus mounts the Cross...
 - Really...He's taking His pulpit...for the last time...
 - and each word...would have cost Him tremendously.
 - The hands...that once accepted the gifts of the Magi...
 - have now been pierced...with crude nails.
 - That brow...on which divine majesty...made its throne...
 - is now wearing a crown...of piercing thorns.
 - And those infant feet...that were once too small...
 - to bear the weight...of divine omnipotence...
 - are now unable to walk again.
 - But He speaks. He speaks only seven times.
 - But He has so much to say...in those few words.
 - Really...they summarize His entire life.
 - So let's examine them briefly...but carefully...
 - because from that Cross...
 - Jesus is speaking to you.

1) *"Father forgive them for they know not what they are doing."*

- The first words are not what was expected...usually some form of a curse...
 - but instead...they are a plea for forgiveness.
 - Everything is about forgiveness.
 - He was asking for the forgiveness...
 - of those who preferred Barabbas to Him...
 - of those who were mocking Him...
 - of those who were nailing him to a tree.
 - Men usually die...proclaiming their innocence...
 - condemning those...who sentenced them to death...
 - or asking pardon for their sins.
 - But Jesus...He asked no pardon...instead...He gave it.

2) *"I tell you, this day you will be with me in paradise"*

- The thief on the left was mocking Him...asking Jesus to save Himself...and them.
 - But the Good Thief spoke up:
 - *"Have you no fear of God? You are under the same sentence as he.*
 - *For us it is just; we are paying the price for our misdeeds;*
 - *but this man has done nothing wrong."*
 - Then he turned to Jesus and said,
 - *"remember me when you come into your kingdom."*
 - A thief at death's door...asked to die like a thief...
 - and he stole heaven as a result.
 - The first person...to be assured a place in heaven...did not live a saintly life.
 - It was the thief's last prayer...perhaps even his first.
 - The offer of mercy is extended...even to our last and dying breathe.

3) *“Woman, behold your son.... Son behold your mother.”*

- Mary was there at the foot of the Cross...
 - saying ‘yes’ to the tree of the Cross...
 - in response to the ‘no’ of Eve...to the Tree of Life.
 - Now the New Adam...Jesus...
 - would give birth to the Church...from His side.
 - And Mary...the New Eve...
 - would be the Mother of all the living.
 - This is her second annunciation.
 - Jesus’ brothers and sisters are
 - *“those who do the will of my heavenly Father.”*
 - Jesus truly founded his family...by the redemption...of His Cross.

4) *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*

- It got dark on Calvary. The pain began to mount.
 - And then the Father allowed Jesus...His last and greatest suffering:
 - to feel abandoned.
 - So He called out to His Father...
 - in the words of anguish...found in Psalm 22.
 - Jesus was mediator...
 - for all those who feel abandoned by God...
 - and by His trust until the end...
 - He showed us the way through.
 - But to be clear...Jesus was not despairing here...
 - because the soul that truly despairs...never cries out to God.
 - He knew the Father could hear Him...
 - and He made all our sufferings...
 - all our doubts and pain...
 - His own on the Cross.

5) *“I thirst.”*

- Jesus thirsts to fulfill the Scriptures.
 - As Psalm 22 also says:
 - *“My mouth is as dry as potsherd...and my tongue clings to my jaws.”*
 - Jesus experienced...
 - not just a physical thirst...but a spiritual one.
 - Some people have a passion for money...
 - others for fame.
 - Jesus has a passion for souls!
 - *“Give me to drink”* meant *“give me your heart.”*
 - And the tragedy of His love for humanity...
 - is that...in His thirst...
 - we gave Him instead...vinegar and gall.

6) *"It is finished."*

- First...what is meant by *"it"*?
 - Well... *"it"* is His whole mission...
 - especially His passion...
 - which began the night before.
 - And we read...
 - that He said these words crying out.
 - But this wasn't the cry...of someone dejected...
 - murmuring that He's had it...with everything...and wants no more...
 - No these are the words of someone who has finished the race...
 - rejoicing that the work that He'd been given...
 - to accomplish...is finally done.
 - Christ has won victory!
 - He came to die...in order to save us from our sins.
 - As hard as it was...
 - *"it is finished."*
 - It's consummated...
 - and over.

7) *"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"*

- Jesus gave out a loud cry...and said these words...trusting His Father to the bitter end.
 - His garments...are consigned to His executioners...
 - His blood to the earth...
 - His body to the grave...
 - His mother to John...
 - and His soul...
 - all He had left...
 - He entrusted it to His Heavenly Father.
 - These final words...
 - were actually the prayer...that Jewish children...
 - prayed just before they went to bed.
 - And it's a prayer that every one of us...should do daily...
 - for it's a prayer of complete trust in God...no matter what.
- And so today...as we come to venerate the cross...
 - we place ourselves in the same trust of God the Father...
 - who took care of Jesus...
 - and then took Him home.
 - We pray for the courage and humility...
 - to die with Christ...
 - that we might also share...in His resurrection.