

GOOD FRIDAY READINGS APRIL 10, 2020

Reading 1: Isaiah 52:13- 53:12

See, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Just as there were many who were astonished at him, so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals- so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised and we held him of no account.

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

By a perversion of justice, he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgressions of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore, I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

REFLECTION "Prophecy of the Son of God"

The prophet Isaiah wrote about the Messiah who was to come and save God's people from their sins. Through his words we are told of the one who was to come and that he would die like a lamb led for slaughter. Yet this was to be the way the messiah would save people if they would put their trust in him. And if they believed in the Son of God, the Messiah, they would be given the gift of eternal life. As followers of Jesus living hundreds of years after Isaiah's prophecy and after Jesus' time on earth how do we respond to this passage knowing that Jesus is the One who dies for us. God's plan was to save us and enable us to be reconciled with him for ever. But are we willing to believe that this prophecy was in place because we

needed to understand the depth of God's love? God loved us then, and continues to love us now even when we are afraid of the future; even when we question our future or even when we wonder what will happen in our world tomorrow. Yet God loved us and sent the Suffering Servant for us. Is this not enough for us to hold on to today and for all of our tomorrows?

READING 2 Luke 22:39-54

In the reading of Jesus' passion, he has already shared the Passover feast with his disciples, instituted the Lord's Supper and has predicted Peter's Denial.

Jesus came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. When he reached the place, he said to them. "Pray that you may not come into the time of trial." Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me, yet, not my will but yours be done." Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. When he got up from prayer he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, and he said to them "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.

While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came and the one called Judas was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; but Jesus said to him, "Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?" When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, "Lord, should we strike with the sword?" Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police and the elders who had come for him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a bandit? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour and the power of darkness!" Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house.

Reflection: "Jesus' prayers/arrest "

The emotions that Jesus experienced were all mixed up as he sat and prayed in the garden that night. He knew his time had come. He only wanted the disciples to keep watch and stay awake so that they could see him being arrested and how this would all unfold. But they slept. His body was reacting to his feelings and his energy was being used up as he prayed. He knew that his dying was the reason for his life but he still sought solace from God and support from his friends. He was undergoing anxiety, stress, anger, sadness, fear, wonder, abandonment, betrayal, as he was not sure what would happen and when. All he knew was that he was going to die as the prophets had written.

Many people do not like reading or hearing the story of Jesus' passion because it is filled with agony, pain, suffering and it leads to death. Yet we who know the story have to remember that this is not the end. There is hope.

MUSIC “ Go to dark Gethsemane” 133

Reading 3: Matthew 26:69-75

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it before them all of them saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.” When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” Again he denied it with an oath; “I do not know the man.” After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.” Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know the man!” At that moment the rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said, “Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

Reflection: Denied by Peter

It is so easy to say something and not mean it. I won't ever deny you Jesus. Yet just a few short hours later Peter denies knowing Jesus, the teacher and friend. Once he realizes what he has done he begins to cry. What had he done? He was now as bad as Judas for denying knowing him to strangers. For they saw in Peter a man who was anxious and wondering who he was. Servant girls and bystanders- people who are not named play a role here as they call out Peter for knowing Jesus and yet he says no. How are we facing the One whom we call Jesus in this moment? Are we to wondering what is occurring in our lives as we draw closer to the time of Jesus' death? Will we sit and mourn or will be hide and deny that we are Jesus' followers?

MUSIC: “Beneath the Cross” 135 VU

Reading 4 Mark 15:1-5, 11-15

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” He answered him, “You say so.” Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, “Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.” But Jesus made no reply so that Pilate was amazed.

But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, “Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” They shouted back, “Crucify him?” Pilate asked them, “Why what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him!” So Pilate wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

John 19: 1-3

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head; and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews.” And striking him on the face.

John 19:15-17, Luke 23:33-34

They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your King?" Pilate asked. The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.)

There they crucified him, along with the criminals- one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide up his clothing.

Music: "Above All"**Reading 5 Luke 23:44-46**

It was about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon while the sun's light failed, and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father into your hands I commit my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last.

MUSIC: O Sacred Head**Meditation: Peaceful Mourning**

Later that evening, Joseph a rich man from Arimathea went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body for he was a follower. Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a big stone to the door of the tomb and went away.

Where did Joseph go? The disciples were in hiding for fear of the Jews realizing that they had been Jesus' disciples. The women, those who had been at the foot of the cross crying had gone home and comforted each other as they were in deep grief because of Jesus' death.

Then calm came over the land. The day filled with shouting and anger, blood and pain had ended. Darkness had covered the earth and the mystery of the torn curtain was yet to be understood. There was peaceful mourning taking place. Pilate and Herod and the high priests had Jesus killed. The threat they had experienced with his presence was no longer alive. The Sabbath would proceed like others before and life would get back to normal.

But those who were followers and disciples of Jesus were in mourning. The One in whom they had placed their faith and hope for a better life was now dead. The authorities knew that he had a large crowd of followers and some of them could easily be identified. Were their lives in danger? What about their children? Those who were Jesus' followers were now experiencing some of the anxiety, doubt, wonder, pain, stress that Jesus showed when he prayed. What could they do? They turned to grieving and mourning. They prayed to God.

As we experience a Good Friday unlike any other—no special fish fry suppers, no family gatherings and deserted streets all around us we might say that we are in peaceful mourning as well. Not morning—like when the birds first arise and sing- but mourning because of the losses we have all be experiencing. Loss of community with our church family on this holy day; loss of job, connecting with friends of all ages and sharing and doing everything through screens and computers and images that just do not seem real or necessary. Yet this is a different world now with COVID 19 spreading around the world leading to many deaths. It is a different world than 3 weeks ago when we started Lent and looked forward to the celebration of Christ's resurrection with the Christian church around the world. But it may be different yet we are still in peaceful mourning today. We are mourning the deaths of thousands around the world. We are praying for the many who are sick right now, who need medical assistance and are showing the symptoms of this disease which has caused the world to look at itself and stop.

We cannot help but see that God is looking to us all on this Good Friday to remember what Jesus' death was all about. He came to Save people from sin and offer the gif to eternal life. No matter where you are this morning, we are all in mourning- the loss of routine, jobs, steady routine and wondering what life will be like in one month, two months or even 6 months from now. Are we worried? Or are we at peace because we know that with Good Friday there is an Easter celebration to come. Like the caterpillar prepares itself to be wrapped up and cocooned there is the knowledge that some thing better, different will come. Are we experience this kind of peace as we mourn what once was? Are we mourning because we like Peter have denied our relationship with Jesus for so long that we have to do something about it? What are we going to do? We can pray- we can offer to Christ on the cross sour sins, our guilt our losses. And we can wait with expectant hope that the new day will come- The day which we call Easter. The day when we will hear the new song of faith and hope in Jesus.

But for now we need to take this time and mourn Jesus' death and the deaths of those whom we love. We need to remember that he said that he would build the temple after e three days. And we need to trust him for when we place our trust in God, there is peace like no other. There is peace which reigns forever. And there is peace knowing that even though Jesus dies, there is hope. Even though we know that many people have died from this disease, there is hope; each day brings us new understanding of what it is all about. And there is hope that we will get through this together; that these times will pass and we will gather again. And like Jesus' disciples and faithful followers were experiencing Peaceful mourning so do we. Except we also know that there is hope beyond cross and for this we wait with expectant hearts..

Music: "Old Rugged Cross"**Prayers of God's Family and the Lord's Prayer**

Loving God, we come before on this Holy day where we remember Jesus' death on the cross. We are mourning many losses at this time God and we need to turn to you. Help us to put all what is in our heart and minds on you for we know that there is a new day coming when our mourning will turn to dancing; when what we have lost will be filled again. But God today we remember Jesus- on the cross, alone, seeking forgiveness for those who did not understand who he was.

We remember his passion for all people, the love for his closest friends and for those who denied him when he needed them the most. Help us to turn our face to you this day as we seek forgiveness, healing and wholeness- of body, mind and spirit. Show us Christ on the cross as he dies for us Remind us again why you sent Jesus. Not to condemn the world but that the world would be saved through him. We pray that all who believe in him will be delivered from sin and death and receive the gift of everlasting life.

Hear our prayers we offer to you in this time. SILENCE.

We ask this as we continue to pray the words Christ taught: OUR FATHER, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

Music: "What Wondrous Love is This"**REMOVAL of STOLE/ EXTINGUISH Candle****Commissioning**

Let us go into this time of waiting and watching, and peaceful mourning. Let us be safe, let us remain healthy. And know that we are not alone. God's Spirit is with us now and always. Amen.