

Good Friday Homily: April 2nd, 2021

In the Garden of Gethsemane, when the crowd came to arrest Jesus, He told them all that this was the hour of the power of darkness. Jesus would allow that power of darkness to have its way because it would fulfill the will and plan of the Father, and not because He was being overpowered by it. He proved that when He addressed the crowd with His Divine title "I AM He", and they fell backward and to the ground. As we contemplate this account of Jesus' Passion it will be good to remember that all that happens was never out of Jesus control, He remained in control throughout, and willingly submitted to all that was to come out of love for the Father, and love for you and me.

As we progress through this account, as the candles on the altar are extinguished, and as the lights in the Sanctuary are dimmed, we seek to emphasize how that power of darkness is increasingly having its way. At the same time it is good for us contemplate what is behind that darkness. Certainly, there is Satan and his demons. Satan has been on the run from Jesus ever since his resounding defeat during Jesus' 40-day wilderness temptation. And from then on during Jesus' ministry as He brought the reign and rule of God into the heart of believers and cast demons out of the hearts of the afflicted Jesus was winning one battle after another. But Satan has been biding His time. And now that the door of opportunity has been opened, he, with all the hatred he has for God, will do his worst. But that darkness is composed of something else: your sin, my sin, and the sin of all mankind past-present-and future. Truly our sin is the reason that this darkness must fall upon and grab hold of Jesus and have its way with Him. This is Jesus making sure that the power of darkness can never have its way with you or me.

This is a very moving account for me, and I pray for you too. It brings deep sadness as we contemplate what Christ was made to suffer for us. But I pray your sadness stops short of despair. It should move you to repent of your sins, and as you do to look to your Savior. Look to Him who cries out from the cross "Father forgive them". Look to Him who endured the cross and its shame not with hate in His heart for you, but with love. Look to Him who described all these events before hand as "what must happen" because He is the God who desires that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Hear Him declare at the end that "It is finished" and understand that for you this means that He has finished suffering for you sins, that they have been paid in full.

Finally, throughout this evening, look to the resurrection., because no one and no thing can take that away from you. That stands as the culmination, the crowning achievement of all Jesus suffered and died for. Not just His resurrection, but what it promises: yours, and mine, and all who believe. May all your sadness and tears shed over Jesus Passion this night serve to make your Easter Morning celebration that much more joyful, your hearts that much more lifted up, and your relationship with our Risen Savior that much stronger. May it make His love that much more evident in your life and mine. Amen.