

Homily > Good Friday ©, 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2025

Today, we gather to commemorate the central event of our faith — the Passion, Death, and Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a day of solemn reflection, a day of great sadness, but also a day of hope. For the cross is not just a symbol of suffering, but a symbol of love, sacrifice, and ultimate victory over sin and death.

Jesus has explicitly said: if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me (Mk 8:34).

Pope Francis has emphasized in his first sermon in Vatican on 14 March the nature of Christian faith as a movement. “When we journey without the cross, when we build without the cross and when we confess a Christ without the cross, we are not disciples of the Lord: we are worldly, people, but not disciples of the Lord”. We want to follow Jesus with Cross. Then we are known as his disciple. In the cross we find salvation, life and hope. The fruit of the cross is eternal life.

As we look at the cross today, we are faced with a stark reality: Jesus, the Son of God, suffered and died for our sins. He didn’t deserve to die. He lived a perfect life, full of love, mercy, and compassion. Yet, He chose to endure unimaginable pain and rejection so that we could be reconciled with the Father. This is the mystery of the cross: God, in His infinite love, gives His life for the salvation of the world.

In the Gospel of John, we hear the words of Jesus: “*It is finished.*” These three words are not words of defeat, but words of triumph. Jesus knew that His mission was completed. Through His suffering and death, He destroyed the power of sin and death. The veil of the temple was torn, the earth shook, and the world was changed forever. The battle was over, and love had won.

But what does this mean for us today? How do we respond to this great act of love? We must recognize that the cross is not just something that happened two thousand years ago. It is a present reality in our lives. The cross challenges us to live in a way that reflects the love and sacrifice of Christ. The love that took Jesus to the cross is the same love we are called to embody in our daily lives.

This is not easy. We live in a world where suffering is often seen as something to be avoided at all costs. Yet, Good Friday teaches us that through suffering, we can experience transformation. Just as Christ's death led to resurrection, our struggles can lead to growth, compassion, and a deeper connection with God and with each other. We are invited, in a small way, to unite our own sufferings with the suffering of Christ. In doing so, we participate in the redemptive work of God.

On this Good Friday, let us reflect on the depth of Christ's love for each of us. Let us also reflect on how we are called to love in return. Love that is selfless, sacrificial, and willing to bear the burdens of others. This is the way of the cross.

As we approach Easter, we do so with a renewed awareness of the price that was paid for our freedom, and with a deep sense of gratitude. The joy of the Resurrection awaits us, but today, we

pause at the foot of the cross, humbled and in awe of the great love that has been poured out for us.

Let us pray that, in our own lives, we may follow Christ's example of love and sacrifice, and share His light and hope with a world that desperately needs it.