

Good Friday

By Father John Catoir JCD – 2/18/18

On Thursday evening, Jesus retreated from the upper room and went to a nearby garden to pray. An agonizing emotion came over him as he awaited his fate. After an hour or so, he heard men talking in the distance. He looked up, and there was Judas leading a group of soldiers. They came toward him and Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. The soldiers arrested him immediately and brought him before Pilate. He was falsely accused and condemned to be tortured.

For an hour, Jesus was beaten, scourged, and crowned with thorns. Pilate heard the mob shouting: “Crucify Him! Crucify Him,” and he condemned Jesus to death by crucifixion.

On the way up the hill to Golgotha, ‘The Place of the Skull’, where all public crucifixions were held, Jesus fell twice. The mob cursed him all along the way. His mother Mary, followed in anguish. Seeing her in such obvious pain only added to his own sorrow. When Jesus fell a third time, a stranger named Simon, was pulled out of the crowd. The soldiers made him help Jesus continue up the hill.

A woman named Veronica, suddenly appeared from the crowd to wipe Our Lord’s blood-soaked face. He was able to see a group of women in keening in tears. He told them not to weep for him, but for themselves and their children. All this time, Jesus felt the wood of the cross scraping against the open wounds on his back. He was losing blood rapidly.

When they reached the place where he was to be crucified, the soldiers stripped him of his garments, and jeered at him. He humbly submitted to their brutality. A soldier threw him to the ground. His crown of thorns hit the cross and dug in more deeply. Once again, his face was covered with blood. A soldier held his outstretched arm down

and hammered a six-inch spike into the wrist of Jesus, fastening him to the cross. This same excruciating procedure was repeated with his other arm.

They lifted the whole structure and dropped it into a hole. Jesus screamed in agony. Hanging between two thieves he cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me." (Matt. 27:45). As God incarnate, Jesus was in constant union with his Father's love, but he was suffering from extreme shock, and was near death. He hung from the cross struggling for breath, as they pierced his side with a sword. Jesus breathed his last breath,

"It is consummated."

The crowd became silent. Suddenly the earth shook, and a great darkness came over the land. The people were terrified. One soldier was heard to say, "This man truly was the Son of God." -Matt. 27:54.

Peter and the other disciples had scattered out of fear for their lives, but a wealthy disciple, Joseph of Arimathea came forward. He had already asked permission from Pilate to take down the lifeless body of Jesus and prepare it for burial. Mary was there at the foot of the cross; she held him on her lap and wept.

Once Jesus was laid in Joseph's tomb, the soldiers sealed it closed with a huge rock. Two soldiers stood guard at the tomb throughout the night.

The passion and death of Jesus had come to an end. What happened next was the miracle of miracles.

On third day Jesus rose from the dead.