

Homily for the Good Friday Passion of the Lord

It was past midnight when Our Lord Jesus Christ was betrayed and was taken into custody by the Roman authorities. Then, for the next several hours, He was bounced around, back and forth between the religious and the secular powers. It seems like everyone wanted to cast the blame on someone else for the ruthless act that was about to happen – the murder of an innocent man. But, before that would take place, he would first be ridiculed, despised, and tortured – unrecognizable by the time He was crucified.

And yet, all of this was prophesied many centuries before by the Prophet Isaiah, who we heard from in our first reading this evening. Listen again to his words: “there was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him...He was spurned and avoided by people...one of those from whom people hide their faces...” I mean, maybe if Jesus would have been a little more glamorous or exciting, or with better legal defense, maybe then people would have noticed Him for who He was, and paid Him some attention. But instead, they treated Him like a common criminal. And the sign indicating His crime, which would hang above His cross? “The King of the Jews”. Don’t look like no king to me!

But Isaiah goes on: “*Yet* it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as... one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins; upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed.” Have you even been so sure you were right about something, only to find out later that you were dead wrong, and by the time you found this out it was too late?

Who is this Jesus – this King? With the eyes of today’s world, He’s perhaps a nice guy, a good teacher, maybe even a far-out revolutionary. But with the eyes of faith among those who believe, we know better. We know this was no ordinary man. For with the soldier who pierced His side on the cross, we say, “Truly this man was the Son of God”.

“Jesus, as we commemorate your passion and death today, we profess our faith in you and your saving sacrifice for us. We pray for those who reject you because they do not know you, or because they hate you, or because they’re just indifferent. May they not find out too late who you are. Save us all Lord, save us. And help us to always remain united with you, who have given your life as a ransom for ours. This we ask through Christ our Lord.” Amen.