

30<sup>th</sup> March 2018 (Good Friday, Year B)

Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 30(31):2,6,12-13,15-17,25; Hebrews 4:14-16,5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42.

**... to bear witness to the Truth; ...**

Last night we gathered as a community to start the most solemn celebration in our annual calendar. The gospel reading yesterday reminded us that Jesus loved those who were his own in this world, to the end. He showed this by taking on the position of a slave, washed their feet and gave them his body and blood to eat and drink.

Today we listened to the story of Jesus' suffering and death according to John. One interesting note that comes out of this reading is that Jesus is not presented to us as a defeated person, but as one totally in control of what is happening.

The gospel according to John tells us that Jesus is the Lamb of God that will be offered in sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus became human so that we can get to know the Father and so that through him we could once again be reconciled with the Father. Jesus is the bridge (salvation) that unites us with the Father. At the beginning of today's gospel reading we see Jesus who is not betrayed by a kiss, but comes forward and asks: 'who are you looking for? I AM!' Once again we hear the great 'I AM' echo in our ears; the soldiers fall backwards in the presence of the divine, Jesus is the Son of God!

In front of Pilate Jesus declares that he is king, but not the same way as the world understands kings or earthly rulers. Many of the leaders of this world make themselves look like gods; they take part in pageantry and parade in front of the whole world. We often see this happen on our TV screens. Jesus' kingship or rule comes from the Father; Jesus declares that he is Truth. Pilate does not understand this, he smirks and asks: 'And what is truth?' How do you define truth?

This is a question we are often asked and we often ask ourselves: what is Truth? We often experience truth as being shapeless and formless; often it is something that we can easily twist in order to suit the situation we are in. In a world of social media, many different shades of truth are often presented. We have also come to believe that truth can be subjected to democracy; we can vote to decide what is the truth we want to adhere to.

In Jesus, God, there is only one Truth and it is unchanging. Yesterday Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, today he accepts to die on a cross, like a common criminal, in defence of the Truth. By comparison we see Peter who when asked whether he knew Jesus, he twisted the truth, denying any knowledge of Jesus!

Where do I stand? It is not easy to stand up for the Truth. Jesus had to give up his life for the Truth. Through my Baptism I profess to believe in the Truth, but am I ready to stand up for what I believe or do I run away and hide when I am faced with difficult decisions? Do I make up my own truth when it suits me?

Later on today we will have the opportunity to venerate the cross as it passes over our heads and we hand it on to each other. As I touch the cross and feel its weight, may I also feel the weight of Jesus' sacrifice for me to be able to be reconciled to the Truth. As I pass on the cross to those next to me, may I be courageous enough to be able to stand up for the Truth.

Fr Mario