

**The Passion of our Lord: Good Friday
Grace Church of West Feliciana Parish
St. Francisville, LA**

25 March 2016

We are here today to remember a great injustice. Under the cover of night our Savior was arrested, accused, tried, mocked, spat upon, ridiculed, dragged from courtroom to courtroom, whipped, humiliated, and then killed as a common criminal. In the eyes of the world this great tragedy is nonsensical and unnecessary. When we say to the world that this death was freely accepted, freely chosen, and, in fact, was part of God's salvation plan for the whole world, we must be ready to see incredulous looks and doubts. Why did we need someone to willingly die for us? Do we still believe that we are stained by some kind of sin that needs to be removed?

Our world has lost all concept of sin, of divine justice, of fall from grace that has separated us from a proper relationship with God. And since many no longer have a need for the hypothesis of sin, what Christ did for us on the cross becomes incomprehensible. Many in the sophisticated, post-modern, western world, have moved beyond a need for Jesus, the High Priest, who offered his blood on the altar of the cross to atone for the sins of the whole world. They no longer need a mediator, no longer need a sacrifice through which their relationship with God is restored. They have no need to accept personal responsibility, to repent, to hold fast to the content of their faith, and to look to the one that was pierced for their redemption and restoration.

We are doing here today on this beautifully sunny day is revolutionary. We are here because we are willing to affirm that we are not yet whom God created us to be. We have not yet arrived at our destination. We are broken and in need of a Savior to guide us the rest of the way. We know that we try hard, but, we also know that we fail to live up to our commitments, to love as the Messiah has loved us, to forgive as we have been forgiven, to be thankful for god's blessings in our lives, to be aware of our privilege and our blessings. In short, we fail to remember how much God loved us and we know that we need Christ crucified in our lives and in the lives of our families.

We need Christ crucified because our worlds have become fluid. We no longer just inhabit this space and time, but also inhabit Cyber-worlds, where we engage in thousands of human interactions everyday without ever having to leave the comfort of our homes. Our lifestyles have become fluid, as the boundaries between right and wrong become more relative and we constantly create and recreate ourselves into anything that pleases us at the moment. Our relationships have become fluid, as we enter in and out of relationships at an ever increasing pace and become more isolated from each other. Our faith has become fluid, as our mistrust of priests and institutions continues to drive us

away from church, and as we become more universalist, less sure of what we truly believe in, and more syncretistic.

The irony of this is that the world is hungry for divinity. The world is starving for meaning and depth. We are in need of grace and forgiveness. We need this Jesus who is dying on the cross for us today. He is the High Priest who is “able to empathize with our weakness... he has in every way been tested as we are...” He knows what it feels like to have humanity under his skin, he is no stranger to human suffering, betrayal, pain, and anguish. He knows what it feels like to be victimized, unfairly treated, and ridiculed. We have in this Jesus of Nazareth the answer to our human need for the sacred, the holy, the transcendental. Only in him can we find restoration and completion. He goes willingly to the cross for us today and accepts the stripes that make us whole. He is willing to let himself be crushed for our transgressions, and to carry the burden of our sins on his shoulders.

It is for this reason that we must approach the throne of his grace with boldness, as the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us. Let us approach the throne of his grace that we may “receive mercy and find grace to help us in our times of need”. Only Christ can save us from this drifting fluidity of our world today. Only he can give our faith the anchor that it needs. Without him the world slips into an “anything goes” mentality. With him in our lives we begin to see others as our brothers and sisters, we begin to see the world as the mission field, we begin to see ourselves as beloved by God and precious in his sight.

We need this radical Jesus to wake us up from our slumber, to give our faith the depth of maturity, and lead us into a lifestyle of service firmly rooted in love of God and love of others. The world needs this High Priest and it is our responsibility to share him with others who do not yet know him. Let us come to his altar today to get the boldness and courage we need to be his witnesses in St. Francisville, West Feliciana Parish, the State of Louisiana and to the ends of the world.

Let us Pray, Dear God, thanks of the sacrifice of your son on the cross that the whole world “might come within the reach of his saving embrace”. Help our world to see in Christ the solution to what afflicts the human heart. Help us also as a church to boldly preach the name of Jesus with our words, but most importantly, with our lives. We ask you this in Jesus Name. Amen!