



Good Friday
Celebration of the Lord's Passion
Friday 30th March 2018

This day is observed as a day of fast and abstinence
Keynote: Triumph and victory in the time of suffering

Prophet Isaiah 52: 13- 53: 12

The liturgy starts with a silent prostration before a bare altar in the unadorned church. This reading helps us to focus upon the figure of the 'Suffering Servant'. Remember the Prophet Isaiah was speaking of these things hundreds of years before the time of Jesus, yet there are such striking similarities that it is hard for the Christian today, reflecting upon these words, not to recognise the physical and mental sufferings of Jesus: *'a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering... yet ours were the sufferings he bore... pierced through for our faults... through his wounds we are healed... for our faults struck down in death... they gave him a grave with the wicked, a tomb with the rich. By his sufferings my servant shall justify many.'*

Responsorial Psalm 30 (31) – A song of confidence by one in distress

Letter to the Hebrews 4: 14-16, 5: 7-9

There is still much debate about the group to whom this letter was addressed. It may have been convert Jews, or even Gentiles who were attaching too much importance to the Temple sacrifices of the former times. What is clear is that the writer exhorts us to understand that in Jesus we have the supreme High Priest, that the Sacrifice that he offered is greater than any before. *'We have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin. Let us be confident, then, in approaching the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy from him... He submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard... he learnt to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation.'* The author urges: *'we must never let go of the faith we have professed.'*

Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to John 18: 1 – 19: 42

This account of the Lord's Passion is set out in a series of scenes:

- [1] Jesus under arrest;
- [2] Jesus before the High Priest;
- [3] Jesus on trial before Pilot the Roman Governor;
- [4] Jesus brought to crucifixion and death;
- [5] Jesus buried.

John in giving his account of the Last Supper remarks almost casually that as they went to the garden of Gethsemane *'night had fallen.'* No accident that turn of phrase! For John will cast much of the account of the Passion in terms of the conflict between light and darkness, good and evil, the powerful, and the weak, between the civil power of man, and the power of the Kingdom of God. Rightly, Jesus challenges the Roman Governor Pilot to understand the truth in these events. Indeed, *'What is truth?'* asks Pilot, and then maybe later, the truth is revealed for the sign written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin which describes *Jesus as King of the Jews*, is acknowledged by Pilot himself, *'What I have written, I have written!'* Then, as now, the faithful keep vigil at the tomb, and in prayer waiting for the Easter morning...

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Complete the celebration of the Triduum by joining the Church at the Great Vigil of Easter.