

PRAYER AND PONDERING POINTS

THE SACRED TRIDUUM 2020

GOOD FRIDAY, April 10, 2020

Rdg 1: Is 52:13-53:12

In the last of the four Suffering Servant Songs in Isaiah, the structure is the same: suffering in obedience leading to triumph. The images of the sufferings of Christ are many: "...spurned, ...pierced, ...crushed, ...lamb led to the slaughter." As you reflect on this reading, find yet more. But one thing clear in this Song: this suffering is for others: "He was pierced for our offenses...by his stripes we were healed." The Song starts: "He shall be raised high," a sign of that triumph that is spoken of again at the end, but, in John's Gospel, it also refers to Jesus being raised up on the Cross and drawing all to himself. (cf. Jn 12:32)

Resp: Ps 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25

The response itself ("Father, into your hands I commend my spirit") is from Luke 23:46, but also from this Psalm. Jesus was familiar with the Psalms; he prayed them – and he this one from the Cross. Notice again the many images that echo the Passion of Jesus ("object of reproach," "laughingstock," "[they] flee from me," "persecutors"). But also notice the steadfast trust in God. A part of the Church's night prayer (Compline) is these very words: "Into your hands...."

Rdg 2: Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9

The Letter to the Hebrews is powerful and challenging. It tells us a lot about faith and about the work of our great high priest, Jesus Christ. It may seem that we have been led by the first reading and the response toward the mystery of the Lord's Passion about to be proclaimed. But this reading from Hebrews seems to thrust us into the very heart of this mystery's challenge. The key is in obedience: the obedience of Jesus to God and of us to Jesus.

Gospel: Jn 18:1-19:42

John's Gospel is reserved for the Good Friday Passion account for a reason: Jesus throughout is "in charge": his life is not taken from him; it is given in loving sacrifice by him. Notice the serenity of Jesus, his majesty in the face of his accusers, his enemies, even his faltering followers. "Behold, the man" and the Son of Man and the Son of God. The thirst of Jesus is not just for water but for justice and for us. Blood (of the Eucharist) and water (of Baptism) flowed from his pierced side.