



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

## **Good Friday – Years A, B, C**

### ***Why we dare to call this Friday ‘Good’***

*Readings: Isaiah 52: 13- 53: 12, Ps 30, Hebrews 4: 14-16, 5: 7-9, John 18: 1 – 19: 42*

*Tell me, Christian, what is it about this Friday that you dare to call it Good?*

*Is it that you rejoice in the death of an innocent man?*

*Do you have some pleasure in the perverse delights of human cruelty?*

*Do you like to see the outworking of human depravity and injustice?*

*What philosophy is this that demands a human sacrifice?*

*The self-proclaimed prophet Mohammed gained victory by the sword.*

*You seem to glory in defeat.*

*The Buddha sought the elimination of suffering.*

*You claim it as a gateway to wisdom.*

*Wherein resides the love of God in this day of torture?*

*What need have we of God besides, now that we have outgrown the ancient myths our fathers told at homely hearths of yesteryear?*

My friend and fellow traveller on this road of mortal life, I understand your puzzlement but you must bear with me and accompany me a little on this pilgrimage of paradox.

*So, Christian, why do you rejoice in the death of an innocent man?*

First you must know that though this is a man yet He is the One in whom full humanity, unstained by sin, resides and He is also God indwelt in human flesh, the Holiest of Holies incarnate. Without His humanity He could not represent me. Without His divinity He could not save me. Without His innocence my guilt condemns me. Because of the death of this innocent man, my life is committed to the defence of the innocent, at war with those who seek their destruction.

*What draws you to this scene of human depravity and injustice?*

In each cruel affliction of the sinful on the sinless One I understand my part in the Passion, my follies that form the thorn crown, my weaknesses that drive the lash, my chosen falls that hammer every nail. I do not rejoice at His humiliation for truly it belongs to me. But I am eternally grateful that He has taken my lot, my due, my debt and reconciled me, in His mercy, to my maker.

The depravity of man that puts Christ on the Cross tells me of the integrity of God. He chooses to avoid the arbitrary use of power but invades Hell by invitation, there to undo its power forever by the unquenchable victory of His divine life. The death of man is defeated by the life and love of God. The Trojan Horse of Christ's two natures hijacks Hell and assures its eternal defeat. Because of the condemnation of this innocent I look for the face of Christ in all the victims of injustice.

*What philosophy is this that demands human sacrifice?*

There is no good philosophy that demands human sacrifice. It is Man himself who seeks Man's blood but in so doing in Christ this offering is transformed by love from senseless slaughter into a place where true sacrifice, the making holy, is witnessed. The death that I should die is

offered in Him and translated, at the Calvary, into life. Christianity has never been a philosophy. It is a relationship – with God in Christ Jesus.

*The self-proclaimed prophet Mohammed gained victory by the sword.*

*You seem to glory in defeat.*

I cannot, a follower of the crucified, rejoice at victory by arms. Truth can never be determined by terror at sword's point. Reality cannot be re-sculpted by the scimitar. No more can nihilism be confessed by the shadow of nuclear annihilation. Man should never masquerade his own viciousness as a virtue of God. Truth always sets free, reconciles, restores. That is the true victory. The Cross is not a temporary triumph of arms but an eternal victory of love.

*The Buddha sought the elimination of suffering. You claim it as a gateway to wisdom.*

Neither can I subscribe to the godless evasion of the reality of my mortal lot in suffering and death. The self-regarding way, the illusion of becoming someone else before dissolving in some cosmic spiritual soup is not the journey of created Man. The dust and the breath of God coinhere. In Christ that union finds its apogee and I in Christ. In Christ Grace trumps Karma.

*What need have we of God besides, now that we have outgrown the ancient myths our fathers told at homely hearths of yesteryear?*

Nor can I share your godless darkness, however fashionable you may be and however foolish I may seem to the worldly wise. I cannot deny my origin nor deny my end. For I read the old stories and they ring true still. But more than that..... I have known the Man. I have worshipped the God. He has known me better than I know myself. I have walked with Him most of my lifetime. I have met Him often both at the altar and on the seashore

and in the face of a stranger. I will meet Him again in the dawn of the Third Day.

I dare to call this Friday Good because it was here that God rescued me from the disaster of my fallen humanity and called me, reconciled by His sacrificial love, back into that eternal family of the living, my original destiny and now my eternal end. I kneel to venerate the Cross which made this possible.

Kneel with me, stranger, pilgrim, at this crossroad of history and make yourself known to Him who has known you since you came to be. Know this is the mystic sign that points the Way to forever.... and follow. On this Friday we dare call Good, God has restored the destiny of Man.

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