

## **GOOD FRIDAY 15 April 2022**

**Fr Callistus Khathali - HOMILY : GOOD FRIDAY 15 April 2022**

**Isaiah 52:13-53:12**

**Hebrews 4:4-16,5:7-9**

**John 19:1-19:42**

**Isaiah 53:4-5**

Ours were the sufferings he was bearing, ours the sorrows he was carrying, yet we thought of him as someone being punished and struck with affliction by God; whereas he was being wounded for our rebellions crushed because of our guilt; the punishment reconciling us we fell on him, and we have been healed by his bruises.

The Church today calls us to reflect on the mystery of the Lord's cross and his suffering on this very day when he was made to walk around the streets of Jerusalem as a criminal condemned to death while he committed no sin. He was rejected, mocked, scourged, suffered the sorrows unimaginable, pierced, crushed, struck down in death, given a grave with the wicked. Isaiah in our first reading states that he had done no wrong. In fact all our readings today point to the cruelty our Lord suffered.

We should always bear in mind that this was a suffering well planned, and well executed. We now have a pleasure of looking theologically at it as the fulfillment of what Isaiah prophesied in the four songs of the suffering servant of the Lord. The fact remains that the great cause of such suffering was human cruelty at its best. It was the religious leaders of that time who chose to have the just one condemned and killed. They even chose the evil of legitimizing the oppressed regime of the Roman Empire. Among the charges given to Jesus was that he was rebelling against paying taxes to Caesar. Pilate was warned that if he sets Jesus free he will be no friend of Caesar. Crucifixion was the Roman Empire way of executing criminals. The chosen people of God were governed by the "thou shall not kill" commandment given by Yahweh as part of the seal of the covenant made with his people. Here we encounter religious leaders of that time doing the best they could to defy this commandment!

Our Good Friday this year in our KwaZulu Natal Province, and the city of eThekweni (Durban) comes with the devastating disaster of the recent floods. I have heard some people reasoning that this could have been avoided by better planning and better infrastructure. As much as there is a great deal of truth here, one has to imagine the fact that some fancy upmarket properties and state of the art roads were badly damaged as well. Huge containers on our port were also affected. Surely we are being made to share in the sufferings of our Lord. With about 300 lives lost we can surely say that many of our families and communities are sharing in the suffering of Christ.

One of the reasons given for this disaster is that of the effects of climate change. Surely those who have been directly affected by this are not the ones responsible for carbon emissions. In fact it is big industries and highly industrialized countries that are said to be big culprits; yet here we are today sitting with innocent people who have lost their lives. This happens as we reflect on the innocent one who died on the cross this day for the transgressions of many people. Our call is to daily take up our cross and follow him. It is more meaningful today as we think of those carrying their crosses in a very painful way because of this disaster. Like Simon who helped the Lord to carry his cross, let us not stand unmoved in the midst of this tragedy. We too are called to help others carry their crosses at this time. We are also called to do our best in contributing towards giving some relief to those who are afflicted just like the Lord who died so that those suffering may be set free.

As we behold the cross on which was hung the world's salvation, let us look at our current suffering with hope. Let the victory of the cross be our victory.

I pray that we may all carry our crosses knowing that just like the Lord's own cross, ours too are to be transformed into crosses of salvation.

