

Lent 6, 13/4/2014, Holy Trinity

Matthew 27:11-54

Undoubtedly, during this week I will be asked on the university campus, "Are you going away for Easter?"

Then they will realise to whom they are speaking and will say something like this, "Of course you are not: this is your busy time".

So we launch ourselves into Holy Week.

For Christians this is a week that is different from all others.

I suggest that we work through to-day's Gospel reading each day during the week, using as a guide the short titles we find in our Bible or in to-day's Newsletter, then, we are confronted with the deepest of all mysteries of our faith.

This is the mystery of the supreme revelation of the love of God as shown through Jesus.

As we read through the sections of to-day's Gospel, one or two sections a day, we see that Jesus shows the love of God in his attitude towards those who capture him, insult him, torture and kill him.

Read through the text slowly, thoughtfully and prayerfully and experience again the love of God in Jesus and his attitudes to people.

As we do this we don't only think of the love of God in terms of ourselves, family and friends.

We need to turn and look for the love of God as we reflect that love in our attitudes towards the millions of people who live under oppression, tortured, excluded from society and who are displaced from home and country and live in refugee camps throughout the world.

What are we and other Christians throughout the world doing in our attitudes and actions to show the love of God for such people?

As we read and ponder over the narrative that we are reading this week see that the battle in which the people are engaged is between God and the Roman Empire.

"Are you the king of the Jews?" Pilate asks Jesus.

In Pilate's mind this is a most important question. "Do we have here another king challenging the major power of Rome?"

If he is such a king, he can be squashed like an ant under the boot of the power of Rome.

With the increasing nationalism of the Jews at this time Jesus can be a warrior king who can lead them to cut the shackles that bind them to Rome.

Do you want Jesus, or Rome?

Is it God's way or Rome's?

They make their choice between God and Rome and choose Rome.

Yet, Jesus prays, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The choice remains the same to-day for the people of the world, for us.

"Is it God's way or the world's way?"

Now back to the narrative: on Calvary, as we look at Jesus we see a tortured human being, excluded from society, isolated and nailed to a cross, condemned as a heretic having stood before a religious court as well as a civil and military court.

Yet at the time of his death his true identity is revealed by a pagan soldier "Truly this man was God's Son."

If we really want to meet God's Son, we don't seek him far away in the heavens.

We seek him close to us, in the excluded, the disfigured and ugly human beings, those who live and give their lives for their brothers and sisters.

It is here that God reveals himself.

It is here that we can meet Jesus.

Spend the week, then, with Jesus in the scriptures, in ourselves and in the people around us.