

TRINITY NEWS

Lent V Reflections on Christ in Gethsemane before Holy Week

The passage today from the Letter to the Hebrews is clearly a reflection on the Garden of Gethsemane experience of Jesus. “In the days of his earthly life he offered up supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his godly fear”. Only a sometimes discarded alternative text in Luke’s Gospel speaks of his tears in Gethsemane. It says that they were like sweat, like drops of blood falling into the ground. Those words have always seemed to me to be evocative of the anguish that developed in Gethsemane. He looked at the practical matters of his life and saw that he was in deep trouble with the authorities, both Roman and Jewish. But in his own heart and mind he surely saw much more that troubled him.

We can often see the practical aspects of our situations and even be realistic about them. But it is the deeper emotional reflections that cause the most pain and the most confusion. Paul Tillich wrote a marvellous little book called *The Courage to Be* many years ago. Tillich explored notions of courage in history, from the Greek Stoics through the Jewish expressions of it into modern understandings including existentialism, a shaping of philosophy based on reflections about human existence. Tillich was looking for the underpinnings of courage in our own being and in human discourse over the centuries. Oscar Cullmann commented once that Christ showed less courage in the Garden of Gethsemane than Socrates in the face of his own required death from hemlock at the direction of his Greek persecutors. This seems to miss the point.

Even in the layers of tradition that cover what happened in the Garden of Gethsemane, there are clear signs of the anguish of Christ there. He clearly leaves himself in the hands of God and allows himself to be hauled from the garden without too much resistance. He had found a moment of calm in the midst of his anguish, and out of that calm he finds the courage to face what is to come.

Chronic anxiety and a sense of meaninglessness are the mental plagues of our time. When we lose sight of God we lose sight of ourselves. Nietzsche ranted against God, but he feared the loss of God from human comprehension because of the vacuum that would be left by the disappearance of God from our mental frameworks.

One of the marks of mature thoughtfulness is the capacity to see most of the discernible aspects of a situation. This requires courage, because our inner fears may reject some of the aspects. This applies particularly to our real motivations. Someone carved a wooden crown of the thorns around the stone that marks the supposed spot in Gethsemane where Christ is said to have uttered the famous words, "Not my will, but yours be done." The spot may not be right, but the sentiments ring true. The decision to leave himself in the hands of God there led to the crown of thorns being thrust on his head after his arrest.

We all have our Gethsemane moments. We all have to make decisions that are costly. As we get older they get more costly, because time slips through our fingers like sand in an hour-glass. The 'space' of time recedes, and urgency prevails. But somewhere, in "the courage to be" we live again in transparent hope, even for a moment, and in human terms, that is all we have to brace our souls for another day: glimmers of hope, still seeking love and still looking for the face of God as the mirror of our souls.

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Tuesday, 27th March.

- Bible Study, 10am
- Group Discussion @ the Tutton's (#3 Sta. Potenciana, Urdaneta Village)

Thursday, 29th March.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10am, Chapel

Saturday, 31st March

- ECW Special General Meeting, 2pm. Agenda: *To discuss the three (3) events in May.*

HOLY WEEK 2012

Apr 1 Palm Sunday

- 7:30am & 9:30 am Eucharist

Apr 2-4 Monday-Wednesday

- 7:00pm Eucharist

Apr 5 Maundy Thursday

- 7:00pm Eucharist with Washing of the Feet

Apr 6 Good Friday

- 11:00am Stations of the Cross
- 12noon Liturgy of Good Friday

Apr 8 Easter Sunday

- 7:30am & 9:30am Eucharist