

Eve of Friday of The Holy Pascha

Father Luke Sidarous – 5th April 2018.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God. Amen.

The world has not known, since it began, a night like this night. The contradictions are strange. It is impossible for the human mind to comprehend it.

Christ said, 'I am the True Light' (John 8:12), and He is right! The power of darkness arrested the True Light. He said, 'But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.' (Luke 22:53). Can you believe it? That darkness can seize the Light? That's why I say it is beyond comprehension.

Christ is the Word, the Word of the Father, as spoken by the prophets, through whom the world was created. Can you believe that the Word became silent? They would say, "Aren't you going to speak? Well, He is the Word!

In his plan, he was purchasing for Himself all of Mankind, that which is in His image. Can you believe that they sold Him! They offered him up and he procured them. Its beyond the imagination. He is acquiring the whole world, and they are selling Him off. If you analyse the details of the entire night, you will find it so...all the fine details.

When He transfigured on Mount Tabor, and the three apostles saw Him; Peter, James and John, 'His face was shining like the sun' (Matt 17:2) in all its fullness, and no one could look. In the garden (of Gethsemane) Putting His face down to pray, the same face, it says 'His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.' (Luke 22:44)

The same disciples that saw Him, as He always took them, so that "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." (2 Cor 13:1); when He raised the daughter of Jairus, when He transfigured on the Mount of Tabor He would take them. He took them and they were close to the place of His suffering, and He told them, 'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation'. (Mark 14:37), not for His sake, but because you are heading into temptation, and the prayers and vigils will protect you from temptation. Of course, this commandment is for us.

They arrested Him, Judas committed the evil to the end, and handed him over calling Him 'friend'. Who calls a person he wishes to kill his friend?

The conspiracy was to kill, but who were they trying to kill? They were trying to kill Life! Christ is Life! 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life' (John 14:6). What is this? He is Truth, so what do they use, other than false witnesses. Can you believe it?

In the end of it all, it has been 20 Centuries, and all the Church Fathers over the course of 20 Centuries, the Great fathers; St John Chrysostom (The golden-mouthed), Saint Cyril the great, St Athanasius the Apostolic, all the generations of the Church until this day, any who have been given Grace to enter into these sufferings, so that they can try to reveal something of matters which no man or angel can comprehend.

The cost of the sacrifice cannot be understood, what is all this? But the simple answer is that all this is for me and for you, by name. But this is too much! Is it possible that I am valuable to this great extent? Yes indeed.

He trivialised the sufferings, and for what? For you... so that He can save you. And He accepted the anguish so he can give you joy, and He welcomed death to give you Life. This is why I say, the disparities cannot be resolved. So, one must just accept it simply, for it will perplex the mind. o you or I or anyone, in the eyes of Christ is very precious, such that He paid a very dear price to purchase us. This phrase has been used repeatedly in the Bible; 'You have been bought with a price' (1 Cor 6:20) 'you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold' (1 Pet 1:18)

While they gave Him up, He bought you with a very hefty price, and they sold Him for 30 pieces of Silver. Its bewildering!

But let us get into the matter that concerns us greatly; that we must acquire the mind of Christ and live by it. If I am so very, very valuable in His eyes, and He paid the price with great delight. He said, 'for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross (Heb 12:2). He did it joyfully. He was joyous to acquire me. But I want to tell you that he didn't purchase me only, he purchased you also. So, my worth to Him is exactly the same as your worth to Him.

If God endows any one of us with the Spirit of Christ inside him, he will know the value of each person he deals with, whether it be at church, home, with relatives, neighbours and all people equally. Every person is worth the price that Christ paid for us. So, I say, if God endowed a person with this Spirit, then he would look at each person as being so very very precious, and that God paid that hefty price for so and so. So, when we measure the actions that we live by in this regard, we realise that they are very disappointing. Why? Because we look at people through people's eyes. He is good, he is bad. We appraise people based on their measure of worth, He is worth 30 pieces of silver, he is worth 60, and he is worth 100. He has money so he is good, he has a degree, so he is good, he is from a good family, so he is good. These are disreputable people, not worth much. This is a spurious family. When we lived according to people's views and people's eyes, we became very foolish. If God would give you this Grace, which is truth, to look with the eyes of Christ towards every person as being precious, precious, precious! How would you then treat him? Truly! If a person is worth so much...

They called Christ in the prophesies of the Ols Testament, 'the appraised one', because they appraised him with 30 pieces of silver. So, Judas sold him, and the chief priests bought him and slaughtered him. How do you appraise people? With the eyes of Christ.

The Apostle, Paul said my brother whom Christ died for is so valuable. I cannot be a stumbling block to my brother for the sake of food. 'Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.' (1 Cor 8:13)

So, St Paul looked upon everyone through Christ's eyes and so each person became so valued. So, he would prefer to die, and his brother live. 'We then who

are strong ought to bear with the [a]scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please *his* neighbor for *his* good, leading to edification.' (Romans 15:1-2).

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another (Rom 12:10) Of course! Isn't it the honour of the children of God?

So, how do you look at people, honestly. Some people say, 'I don't want to look at his face'. Why man? What did he do? Did you forget that his precious?

Of course, this has made us fall into many sins and made our standard very poor, fighting over money and honour and things of no value, quarrelling and cut people off, and all these silly by-products that we know and live by.

But I urge you in Christ Jesus, that during these times, that the Lord would open our eyes and that we might be elevated to live in Christ, in the Spirit.

What should we do for these, who are so precious? He said 'rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵ After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded. (John 13:4-5)

He got a basin full of water girded himself and sat at their feet. Aren't they precious? And he washed their feet, not for show. In our lives it has almost become show believe me. But he washed him for real because he is truth. So, it's not as an example or a symbol. No no far be it from Christ. He washed their feet because he is truth itself, so he washed them truthfully.

So why feet in particular..

One of the fathers a long time ago who came to the monastery and had been living a very affluent life and they assigned him as the delegate to the Pope. On covenant Thursday he sat on the ground washing feet, and it was like people we're seeing this for the first time. They wondered how he was doing this and cried profusely, although he was just a man, because he was doing it faithfully.

A book about one of the fathers Who was meek and very humble, spoke of the fact that he not only washed the feet but kissed it. He didn't just wash the feet of his brethren or those around him, but rather he would kiss the feet of those precious people Christ had purchased. So why don't we all taste this? Isn't this what Christ did for us?

Haven't we all had our feet washed today? So, don't take it just as a blessing, a symbol, something nice on Covenant Thursday. No, no. Take it seriously. If he himself has washed my feet, then what is the next commandment for me? He says have I not washed your feet? Yes Lord. Then go wash the feet of your brethren. Isn't this the commandment of the Lord? I hope we do not forget it.

I have washed your feet, or in other words I have removed your defilement and your sins and taken them upon myself? I have paid the penalty of your death. So, I have washed your feet as a master teacher and Lord.

"You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also **ought** to wash one another's feet." (John 13:13) So that means it's a necessity.

And if this is the Lord's commandment to me, Then I wish to comprehend it with a greater perception than I am currently living out, and that I wash in truth the feet of my brethren.

The most beautiful sight is when the greatest of us lowers himself to the level of the feet of others. Why? Because then he resembles Christ. What greater honour and grace can there be than that? If he has purchased us, then purchase your brethren. Oh, my goodness! What did He purchase us with...with suffering, with nails, with pains, with sweat, with an oil press in the garden of Gethsemane. What do you think this purchase involves? Locals always say the buyer wins, the vendor loses, so buy your brother with love. Some say, well he is not interested, or his actions, his character, the offenses he caused...how can I forget. When I forget, I remember again and when I remember, the pain comes flooding back, etc... just buy him, brother! Pay! Why don't we buy? Because we are spiritually bankrupt. Those that have, buy! Those that are impoverished can't buy. Be filled with the Love that Christ gave you and buy. Buy the love of people in Christ! When you buy one, two, three, four, ten, one hundred... you will be very wealthy. When you sell you become poor!

The details of the pain, only He knows. He said, "I have trodden the winepress alone and from the peoples no one was with Me." (Is 63:3)

The cost of the Cross cannot be expressed, we are just speaking words, but none of us have experienced the nail being hammered into the hand truly, we are just talking. But live in the love that Christ has poured upon us. We are, in these days, there is a great blessing that has been poured out on us, especially in our little church here. We thank Him.

But I hope that it will be taken to the level of practice. Blessings are nice. Live it! Not for a day but exercise it and you will have joy. Live in Christ, by His Spirit, and be fruitful for the Lord.

To our God be the Glory, forever and ever. Amen