

Good Friday

3rd April 2026

'Triduum II: Consummatum est'

Is 52–53: *He was pierced for our transgressions*

Ps 30: *Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit*

Heb 4; 5: *He learned obedience and became the source of salvation to all who obey Him*

Jn 18–19: the Passion according to John.

“Less is more,” as they say. True of a student essay. True of most human discourse, I think. Waffling gets you nowhere. One of my friends who did English at Cambridge gave me sound advice, years ago. She said, once you’ve written your essay, take the text, *delete* the first paragraph, *delete* the last paragraph, and *then* hand it in” — it’ll be much better, more punchy, to the point! And one of the Southwark seminarians I was with in Rome, ordained a priest during my years there, had the incredible gift of the 90-sec homily! — profound, to the point; say it and stop.

St John — whose beautiful Passion text we have just heard, quite a lot shorter than the St Matthew version we had last Sunday — certainly has the art of the sound-bite, and can say very much in just a few words. Yesterday, on the 1st day of the Paschal *Triduum*, celebrating the Last Supper, we noted that the Jn 13 Gospel could be summed

up in just 6 words, “*He loved them to the end*” (only 4 words in Greek and Latin). Today, the 2nd day of the *Triduum*, I suggest we can do the same (Jn 19:30): “*It is accomplished*” — 3 words in English; 2 words in Latin (“*Consummatum est*”); only 1 word in Greek (*Τετέλεσται*). “It is accomplished” / “It is finished” / “It is consummated” — yes, this marriage of God & man is now consummated, this laying down of life by the Bridegroom for the Bride, this sacrifice out of love for humanity; this spousal act of love-making, *it is consummated*. It’s not just that it’s done and over, thank God, but that it is *fulfilled*, and perfected, and the Passion has reached its climax. “*Greater love hath no man ...*” On one level, what more can one say? Our Lord’s actions which we have heard of there in the Passion according to St John need little other explanation, few other words, if any. In fact, I often feel after the Passion Gospel that it would almost be better to say nothing, to keep quiet, just to meditate on that one word, *Τετέλεσται*, “*it is accomplished*.”

A couple of days ago we had our last LSE CathSoc

lunch and meeting of term. As the theme for our lunchtime discussion we took the Passion: our students were invited to comment on what struck them from the Passion Gospel last Sunday, or watching ‘The Passion’ film on Monday. It was an extraordinary exercise, and very inspiring — I just wish we could have recorded it for posterity! Every one of the 14 or 15 round the table offered something different: 14 or 15 perspectives, points of interest, prayer, or inspiration to faith, that came out, for them, from their listening to, or watching, the Passion of Jesus. A realisation of the utter brutality of the treatment of Jesus, was one; the fact that Jesus despite the chaos and the sufferings was always ‘in control’ of the situation — He, on His own, would stand and continue on His way — was another. I noted the presence of His Mother Mary at key moments, and her devoted love to Him that continually expresses to Him at each turn the love of humanity for which He takes this royal road to Calvary. Someone else mentioned the intervention of Pilate’s wife, which they’d never noticed before; another drew attention to Barabbas,

and the fact that Jesus even takes his place, grievous sinner though he was; another spoke of the sad denials of Peter in a moment of fear and weakness. One student contrasted the Garden of Eden (the disobedience of Adam & Eve) with the Garden of Gethsemane (the obedience of Jesus to the Father’s will). Another mentioned the 5 sacred wounds of Jesus received on the Cross, wounds He will carry with Him even into glory. It was a time of great blessing to hear all these students engaging with the Gospel text, and to see how deeply the Passion of Jesus spoke to their heart.

What about you? What detail of the John Passion narrative this afternoon has piqued your interest? What moment of this journey from Gethsemane to Calvary and to the garden tomb has invited you in? Are you there in the garden watching with horror the guards’ arrival to arrest your Master, Jesus, at the dead of night? Are you observing half-hidden, with Peter, the trial before the Sanhedrin? Are you in amongst the crowd at the *Praetorium* still not sure who to vote for — Barabbas, or Jesus? Are you there at the horrific scourging, hardly able

to stomach it as Jesus's flesh and blood is so abused? Are you in the hurly burly of the narrow Old City streets in Jerusalem, being pushed and shoved as the condemned two thieves, along with Jesus, struggle to make their way out of the City carrying their heavy cross-beams? Are you standing, near or far off, on Calvary and barely able to watch the nailing ... the final barbaric episode unfold ... and then the agonizing wait until ... *"It is accomplished!"* Or, finally, are you one of those who take note of the location of the sepulchre as Nicodemus & Joseph hurriedly lay the dead Jesus in the tomb as nightfall and the Sabbath approach? Where are you in this Passion? — Where are you standing? — Where are you watching? — What are you seeing? — What are you feeling? *"Here might I stay and sing: no story so divine; never was love, dear King, never was grief like Thine."*

This Good Friday, rather grey and damp outside, we are huddled in here to express the warmth of our love for Jesus beyond all things; by doing so we acknowledge that this day stands at the centre of all human history, indeed of

all the universe's history: the Cross is the axis on which the cosmos turns. Our being here this afternoon, keeping the 3pm hour of our beloved Jesus's death, is the place we would wish to be each and every Good Friday of our life, for His Cross is the axis on which my own life turns. How shall I show my love for the Crucified? How can I tell Him I love Him who has laid down His life for me? He has said to me, *"Consummatum est!"* — His Passion and Death is that spousal fulfilment, and so I shall *"kiss Him with the kisses of my mouth"* as the Bride says of the Bridegroom in the Song of Songs. Yes, I shall come up now and kiss the wood of the Cross on which He has laid down His life for me, consummated His love for me. I shall kiss it reverently, and meaningfully, and lovingly. I shall kiss, and then I shall be quiet, and sit with Him in His death, and await His reply ... on the 3rd day. Say it and stop.