

GOOD FRIDAY

John 18:1-19:42

HOMILY

In normal times, this church would be full of people at this Commemoration of the Lord's Passion. It is the only time in the church's year when we officially gather at three o'clock in the afternoon. Q: Why do we do that? Simply in recognition that, according to the gospels, Jesus died at that hour. It is also the only day in the church's year when we don't celebrate Mass. I am aware that out there and in here there are, of course, many who have not been able to be physically present at Mass for the best part of a year. In a sense, this past year has been something of a "Good Friday" experience for many. The sense of isolation which is central to Good Friday has been experienced by so many, not only in our parish but throughout the world. Jesus was never more isolated than the Friday when he hung from the cross. For whoever is suffering the effects of isolation, this Good Friday reminds us that the Lord has experienced this pain of isolation before us. He is always with us in our isolation, as one who knows the experience from within. The Passion story we have just read and death of Jesus from John describes how Jesus did have a support group when he was at his most isolated time on the cross. There was a little community of faith at the foot of the cross, the mother of Jesus; his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, Mary of Magdala and the disciple whom Jesus loved, identified in the tradition as John. Even in this dark hour for Jesus, there was a ray of light in the form of this little community. From the moment of isolation, Jesus entrusts his mother and the beloved disciple to one another's care, saying to his mother, 'This is your son', and to the beloved disciple, 'This is your mother'. This beloved disciple is never given a name in this gospel. Perhaps that is because the evangelist wants us to give our own name to this disciple. We are being invited to identify with this disciple in a very personal way. When the other male disciples had fled, the beloved disciple he stayed. Peter failed to love the Lord when it became too costly to do so. There are times when we are more like Peter than the beloved disciple. The Lord is always calling us to remain as members of the community of his beloved disciples.