GOOD FRIDAY: APRIL 3RD, 2026.

STAYING AT THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Today everything is stripped away: no announcements, no prelude music, no entrance song, no procession, no decorations on the altar, no regular celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and no easy answers. All our focus today is on the HOLY CROSS.

ONLY THE HOLY CROSS

And the Cross tells a story… It tells us first who we are, **we were made for love**.

And then something went wrong. The Rescue Project by Father John Riccardo provides a context in which people can experience, explore, share, and live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It aims to ignite faith and encourage evangelization. The Rescue Project names it clearly; we are captured. Not just by sin in general, but by real things: fear, shame, lies, wounds, patterns we can't seem to break.

We try to fix ourselves, manage it, hide it. And we can't.

The Seven Words of Christ from the Cross

1. **"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."**

2. "**Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise**." Then he (one of the criminals) said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23: 39-43)

3. "**Woman, behold, your son…. Son, Behold, your mother."**

4. **"I thirst."**

5. "**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"** And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, Lema sabachthani?" (Mark 15: 33-34)

6. "**Tetelestai" - It is finished** (John 19:30). Mission accomplished, our dept of is paid in full, completely settled, the battle against sin, death and evil was fought and won by Jesus Christ on the Cross. He achieved the end for which he was sent. Jesus has triumphed.

7. **"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit",** and when he had said this, he breathed his last". (Luke 23: 44-46).

That is what the Holy Cross reveals.

If we could save ourselves, the Cross would not be necessary.

But then comes the heart of today:

Ø We are rescued.

Ø Not with words.

Ø Not with advice.

Ø But with a Person – Jesus Christ.

Jesus does not stand at a distance and shout instructions.
He enters the mess. Into the sufferings. Into the worst of it.

And He Stays.

Like someone who runs into a burning building, not to explain the fire, but to rescue all and anyone who might be inside the building. To safely bring out. That is the Cross. Jesus takes on everything that holds us: sin, death, fear, and breaks their power not by avoiding it, but by going through it. And He does this for you. Yes, for you, and also for me.

And now there is only one question left - the final movement: **How will we respond?**

Good Friday is not just something we remember. Good Friday is something we stand before.

- Will you stay at the Cross?
- Will you let Him love you there?
- Will you entrust to Him the very things you try to control?

Today, we don't rush away.

Ø We come forward.

Ø We venerate the Cross.

Ø We bring Him our hopes and dreams, our joy, our sin, our wounds, our burdens.

And we hear, maybe for the first time: You are worth this. You are worth this sacrifice. You are worth this love.

PRAYER:

Lord, today we approach the Holy Cross in reverence and gratitude for your sacrificial love. We surrender at your feet all that weighs us down: our fears, challenges, burdens, loneliness, illness, pains, sins, struggles, and shames. At the feet of the Holy Cross, we lay all our joys,

dreams, hopes, and aspirations. Through the grace of your suffering, grant us healing and hope, grant us strength and peace, grant us the grace of perseverance to the end, and fill us with the active spirit of your disciples, we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Fr. Martin Ezeihuaku, MSP.