

FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

Jesus carried the cross to fulfill the purpose for which he came.

Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12; Psalm 31; Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1 to 19:42

We remember Jesus being betrayed, tried, judged, condemned and crucified. We remember him dying on a cross. We remember Him giving himself totally in life and in death... obedient unto death on the cross.

In the cross, we meet Jesus, the one who took away the sins and overcame death in dying for us. We see much more in this cross. We see the infinite value of human life; we see Jesus dying out of love for humanity; we see redemption; we see the one who left the glory of heavenly home and entered into our earthly life and into our death.

**In the cross we see hope, we encounter love.
The cross tells us that in the love of God nothing is lost.**

We remember the cross, the sign of shame and punishment, becoming the symbol of sacrifice, healing, unconditional love, total giving, redemption and salvation. We remember and relive the passion, the cross and the death of Jesus.

God is found in the most unexpected places and situations. No one expected to find the Messiah on the cross. But that is just the way God revealed the power of His generous, unconditional, unconquerable, benevolent love.

Conflict between good and evil reached climax with the arrest and death of Jesus. To the world Jesus was condemned and finished. To the believer, Jesus being lifted on the cross is the Victory of Grace and the Ultimate revelation of God as LOVE. The death of Jesus reveals the victory of Grace and the power of God's Love.

The one lifted on the cross reveals glory and not shame. The creator of the world comes to the world; walks on the earth which he created; falls to the earth; goes deep into the earth; walks into places where he was rejected!

The creator of the flesh becomes flesh - makes his abode in the flesh. The creator of the tree hangs on the tree and gives up his life for those who rejected him. Acting out of love to the extent of dying on a cross is a mystery hard to grasp! We carry our crosses carefully, trying to make sure they don't take too much out of us!

Reflect on the kind of crosses that you need to carry and the kind of death that you need to experience to come more fully alive in Christ!

Saint of the Day, April 18 - Saint Athanasia of Aegina and 16 other saints are remembered this day.

Athanasia was the daughter of Christian nobles, Niketas and Irene. She grew up in a pious family and early in life felt drawn to the religious life. Legend says that she experienced a mystical union of a star merging with her heart while weaving at the loom when she was a young girl. However, at her parent's request, she married at age 16 to an army officer. Widowed after 16 days of marriage when her husband died in battle against invading Arabs. She again considered the religious life, but an imperial edict required all single women of marriage age to marry soldiers.

She again married this time to a deeply religious man who felt drawn to become a monk and left with her blessing to do so. She became a nun, gave away the bulk of her possessions, converted her home into a convent, obtained a spiritual director named Matthias, had other sisters move in with her, served as abbess, and lived a life of severe austerity. She built three churches.

The community later moved to Timia where Athanasia became widely known for miraculous healings. To escape the press of people who were drawn to her reputation of holiness, and return to the quiet, prayerful life, she and two sisters fled in secret to Constantinople where she lived as an anchoress in a cell for seven years; while walled away, she was an advisor to Empress Theodora. After seven years, she returned to Aegina, where she died of natural causes three days later at Timia on August 14, 860.

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