

Lent Day 37

Wednesday March 28, 2018

Reading: John 18:28-40

²⁸ Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

³⁰ "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you."

³¹ Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

"But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected. ³² This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

Reflection

A number of years ago, as I was driving to Tyndale, I noticed a number of people with graphic signs clearly against abortion. My heart was broken. Not because I'm for abortion, but because I had been working on the board of the Pregnancy Care Centre for 7 years and I had come to know some of the women and men who struggled with this choice. When I saw those condemning signs all I could think about was the people who would receive searing pain as a result. I have to admit I don't love that kind of Christianity.

I think part of my problem is it not the kind of religion practiced by Jesus. Part of the reason Jesus is about to be condemned to death on a Roman cross is he hung out with the wrong people. He ate with tax collectors and sinners; from a religious perspective he allowed himself to become unclean by these people. Jesus didn't keep his hands clean.

However, then there is the religious leaders. They desire to keep their hands clean; even when seeking to have Jesus condemned to death they stay outside so they don't get defiled so they can eat the passover. They have divided the world into clean and unclean and their priority is to remain untainted by the unclean. But in their pursuit for purity they lose sight of the humanity in front of them.

Yes, we're called to be pure, but that doesn't mean we are called to condemn others for being impure. In fact, we are to follow our Lord in moving our purity into the sphere of the impure because of the sanctity of life. We are to so identify with their shame that it becomes ours. This is so because it is true of Jesus.

Prayer

Holy God, who took on our sinful human flesh, thank you for not remaining holy and aloof but instead came and drew our out of our sin and into purity. Thank you for not bringing condemnation, but new life. Amen.