

We have got to reach rock bottom.

God is good. Life is good.

The beauty of our world is just stunning. The beauty of the people around us is stunning. Each breath we breathe, each beat of our heart is a gift from God.

But to enjoy all this - to appreciate all this, we must first of all know rock bottom. We must cry out with Jesus, "*I am thirsty*". We must know the false accusations of high priests and civil authorities. We must know the betrayal of friends and the fickleness of the crowd. Yes, we must even know physical pain and abuse. We must be acquainted with death and despair.

It's not just Jesus who is disfigured, not just Jesus who is despised and rejected, not just Jesus who is like a root in arid ground. This is the human condition. This is our world that has been degraded and polluted. We are all responsible for the injustices of our world. We are all implicated in the scapegoating of the foreigner and the stranger. Looking after Number 1 puts up barriers and bulwarks.

Something has to give. Something has to change. Jesus had done no wrong. There was no perjury in his mouth. Here is your King. Here is the one who is without sin. Only Jesus can change things. Only Jesus can save us from our sins. Offering his life in atonement is what Jesus is doing, taking upon himself all the pain, all the anguish. Everything that is wrong with our world, everything that is wrong with our relationships is now focussed on Jesus. He deals with everything. He heals everything.

But Good Friday is not a piece of magic. Religion is not a magic wand that makes bad things go away and that makes everything automatically okay again. Good Friday is an invitation, an invitation to share.

We don't just come to this liturgy for our own benefit. We come here to offer our lives in atonement with Jesus. We come here to change our world. God is making all things new, and he makes all things new from within, from within our darkness, within our own despair, within our death. So reach rock bottom in God with Jesus, and be ready for the surprise the power and wonder of the Resurrection.

After Jesus had taken the vinegar, he said, "*It is accomplished*".

Fr Michael