

*“The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply,”*

Today’s readings for your perusal are Job 14: 1-14, Psalm 31: 1-4 & 15-16, 1 Peter 4: 1-8, Matthew 27: 57-66.

### **THOUGHT FOR THE DAY – HOLY WEEK - SATURDAY**

Christ was crucified yesterday and we read *“As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.”*

We also know that the leaders of the Jewish Sanhedrin did not want Jesus to be raised from the dead, they were aware of what Jesus taught about his resurrection and in Jewish society even though Jesus was buried on Friday afternoon, that counted as one day and they knew He taught that He would rise on the third day, which would be tomorrow Sunday, we then read about their fear that what Jesus said would come true: *“The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ‘Sir,’ they said, ‘we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.”* Again they Jewish authorities deliberately tried to stop Christ rising from the dead so they made sure they had a guard posted and that the tomb was sealed so no one could get in or out. *“Take a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.”* *“So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.”*

Yet after Christ was crucified, the disciples went away and hid from the authorities who were out to get them, for they knew what Jesus taught but the shock of His beatings and the crucifixion caused them to panic and as far as they were concerned their world came crashing down. And they questioned the same as Job: **14** *“Mortals, born of woman, are of few days and full of trouble. They spring up like flowers and wither away; like fleeting shadows, they do not endure...! A person’s days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed... At least there is hope for a tree: If it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its new shoots will not fail. Its roots may grow old*

*in the ground and its stump die in the soil, <sup>9</sup>yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth shoots like a plant. <sup>10</sup>But a man dies and is laid low; he breathes his last and is no more. <sup>11</sup>As the water of a lake dries up or a riverbed becomes parched and dry, <sup>12</sup>so he lies down and does not rise; till the heavens are no more, people will not awake or be roused from their sleep. Many people at the time of Jesus and those who do not believe in God all have the same view that no one can rise from the dead, when they die that is the end of things. But Job questions this he goes on further and says: <sup>13</sup>“If only you would hide me in the grave and conceal me till your anger has passed! If only you would set me a time and then remember me! <sup>14</sup>If someone dies, will they live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait for my renewal to come. For many Christians it is I wait for my renewal to come, is key, for they know that Christ has risen and when we eventually die, we will be renewed by being raised to a new life in heaven, but prior to that this renewal also takes place when we accept Christ as our Lord and Saviour. So the disciples hid away awaiting their renewal, they knew what Jesus taught but they were afraid, but they waited in hope just like the psalmist for they knew that <sup>1</sup>In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness. <sup>2</sup>Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. <sup>3</sup>Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me. <sup>4</sup>Keep me free from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge. The disciples and many Christians throughout the world today are living in fear of neighbours, the authorities and society in general who do not believe or like what Jesus stands for or teaches. Yet each one of those disciples and each one of those Christians say with confidence <sup>15</sup>My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me. <sup>16</sup>Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love.*

Although on the Saturday Jesus body lay in the sealed and guarded tomb, and the disciples were all in hiding, praying and crying out to God they later on would become strong people of faith and Peter teaches us **4** *Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. <sup>2</sup>As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. <sup>3</sup>For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans [non believers] choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. <sup>4</sup>They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. <sup>5</sup>But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup>For this is the reason the gospel was preached even to those who are now dead, so that they might be judged according to human*

*standards in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit.* Jesus died so that we can live, that is and was the whole purpose of His ministry to bring us back to Him and give us life. This is because *7The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. 8Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.* It was love that took Jesus to the Cross and it was love that raised Him, so if your in hiding in your life come to Christ and let His love renew you to, because it took a group o frightened uneducated fishermen and made them in to fearless preachers of the Gospel message which has and does bring hope to millions of people today, be at peace for the best is yet to come.

### PRAYER

Today Father we sit in locked rooms, or behind locked doors fearful of going outside, just like the disciples that Saturday after Christ was crucified, helps us all today Lord as we stay in lockdown, fearful and worrying about our loved ones and dear friends. Give us the strength we need today, for tomorrow is a good day!

Be with our front line critical workers, whomever they are and wherever they work, bless them today, many will be tired and down, but uplift them we pray and give them your strength and love. Bless our families and friends at this time, keep them safe we pray and give guidance and wisdom to the leaders of our countries so that they may govern wisely and make the big decisions which will help look after the people.

Today Lord we come to you seeking your strength, for the uncertainty around us, help us, guide us, lead us we pray as we get ready to celebrate the Risen Christ.

Amen