

Reflection for Wednesday in Holy Week



Painting by Matthias Storm

The painting shows a single light, a central candle highlighting the accusing finger of Caiaphas as he says, “How can you say you are God”? Jesus stands – a picture of serenity, his head bowed as he is illuminated by the light from the candle, complete contrast from his accuser and the false witnesses behind him. We are invited by the artist to stand alongside Jesus as he refuses to deny that he is the Son of God. Caiaphas is said to have torn his robes and screeched “Blasphemy! We don’t need any more witnesses, we have just witnessed the most grievous blasphemy, right here and now.”

He was triumphant, he had his man!

The act of raising Lazarus from the dead was seen by many of the Pharisees as the last straw for Jesus. They were concerned that Jesus’ influence was growing within the people as more came to hear him speak and see him perform miracles. They felt that as Jesus’ influence grew so theirs diminished and they could not stand idly by and let that happen. The chief priests and Pharisees called a meeting. ‘Here is this man working all these signs’ they said ‘and what action are we taking? If we let him go on in this way everybody will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy the Holy Place and our nation.’ One of them, **Caiaphas, the high priest** offered his twisted logic when he said, ‘You do not seem to have grasped the situation at all; you fail to see that **it is better for one man to die for the people, than for the whole nation to be destroyed.**’ In other words, he appeared to think Jesus was becoming too popular, people were listening to him rather than the Priests and Pharisees, so the obvious answer was to eliminate him. They weren’t going to let power and authority fall from their hands.

How often do we face a situation like this in our own lives? We see someone who is popular, who is well-liked or doing well. Perhaps they have a bigger house than us, more money or more friends. We are just the tiniest bit jealous, and our jealousy can turn into envy. Instead of rejoicing at the blessings of another person we can resent them and wish them to fail. As followers of Jesus, we should turn aside from such feelings and concentrate on our own lives, live as God asks us to, with love in our hearts not coveting what others have.

Look at the picture again and imagine you are standing next to Jesus. You have the advantage of knowing that Jesus is about to die in a horrible way as a sacrifice for you – to save you, and me and all of us from our sin. Having that knowledge, would you remain standing tall next to him right to the very end of his life?

Our Christian goal is to have the courage to stand at the foot of the cross with him on Good Friday, having supported and loved him every step of the way

Reverend Irene.