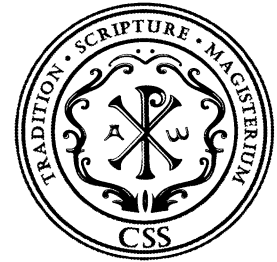


Lesson 27 . . . Death of the Messiah The Gospel of Matthew

.....



Notes From the Podium

By Fr. Matthew Kauth

These notes are intended to augment your own reading and study of the lesson. Please use as an aid to help document the main message of the lecture.

Matthew 27:1-66

- I. “When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death; and they bound him and led him away and delivered him to Pilate the governor.”
 - A. It is divinely ironic that our Lord would be handed over to priests for they were the ones to offer sacrifice.
 - B. The priest, in turn, hand Him over to Pilate.
 1. Pilate is a representative of the gentiles, i.e., of the whole world.
 2. Pilate is participating in this sacrifice because the purpose is to redeem the whole world.
 - C. Pilate possessed the “right of the sword”.
 1. Unlike the Jewish leaders, Pilate had the authority to execute.
 2. The Jews could not execute so they had to take Jesus to Pilate.
- II. “When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, ‘I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.’ ...But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.’”
 - A. Recall that 30 pieces of silver was the price paid for a slave. —*Ex 21:32*
 - B. “Blood money” – If someone were to kill another, money might be paid to the victim’s next of kin to induce him to forego his “right” to seek blood for blood.
 1. *Zech 11:12* - 30 pieces of silver is the insulting amount paid to the Good Shepherd (the Messiah) by the rebellious flock.
 2. Perhaps Judas’ initial repentance is not true contrition, but a repenting unto himself.
 - a. He repented against the law and brings the money back.
 - b. In some sense, he is giving the money to the family, hoping to pay the price for his betrayal.
 3. The chief priests and the elders refuse the money *as if to say don’t pay it to us, we lay no claim to his kingship.*
 - a. Suddenly they become righteous in not receiving the money.
 - b. Yet, they don’t mind putting Him to death.
 - c. Judas throws the silver down in the temple (another parallel - *Zech 11:13*)
 4. The chief priest and elders use the money to buy a potter’s field, the place where potters would go to obtain clay.
 - a. Our Lord is often referred to as the potter and we the clay.
 - b. The word “Adam” means “made out of the clay of the earth”.
 - c. They purchased this potter’s field in a place that they would bury unknown persons and criminals.
 - d. Our Lord is unknown by most and executed like a criminal and His death purchases the potter’s field. (also called “Blood Field”/ “Field of Blood”)
 - III. Jesus Before Pilate
 - A. Pilate asked, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You have said so.”

Notes From the Podium (cont)

1. Recall how Jesus drew that confession from Judas with the same words.
2. Is what he draws here from Pilate is it a confession or a manifestation of belief?
- B. “But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer.”
- C. Pilate, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?” But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge; so that the governor wondered greatly.”
 1. He is charged with claiming to be a king and indeed he is.
 2. What defense can he offer?
- D. Barabbas, ‘Son of the Father’
 1. Ironic that the genuine Son of the Father also stands before them.
 2. In fact, Barabbas is guilty of being the very thing they are accusing Christ of being, an insurrectionist.
 3. Barabbas and Christ stand juxtaposed, one the truth and one a lie.
- E. Pilate said, “Whom do you want me to release for you...?”
 1. This is the fundamental question, do they follow Barabbas, the insurrectionist and *not* the Son of the Father or do they follow the lamb who is led to the slaughter?
 2. “For He knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up.”
 - a. If pride caused the fall both of Satan and of man then it is envy that causes Satan to tempt.
 - i. Thomas Aquinas said that envy was the most insidious of sins. It causes us to not only want the good another possesses, but we also want to make sure that they don’t have it.
 - ii. Envy is the opposite of desiring communion, the opposite of love.
 - b. In the rest of this chapter, all over these passages, we will see the dragon’s prints.
 - i. The very temptation in the garden and in the desert is happening here and envy is one of the footprints of Satan.
 - ii. Satan voice will come through all different kinds of characters.
 - iii. He is very involved here, but just up to the point of being seen.
 3. Pilate’s Wife
 - a. Her name is Prota according to tradition.
 - b. She said, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man...”
 4. Pilate asks the question again, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” - They said, “Barabbas.”
- F. As for Jesus, they said, “Let him be crucified.”
 1. Pilate asked, Why, what evil has he done?”
 - a. Remember, that in the garden, the temptation was to know what is good and what is evil.
 - b. Before the fall Adam and Eve knew what was good, but they had no knowledge of evil.
 - c. Perhaps there is an unconscious desire on the part of the people here to put the fruit back on the tree.
 - i. The fruit that was stolen, it can’t be organic, so it will have to be nailed to the tree... this fruit of our Lady’s womb.
 - ii. Our Lord, through the most sublime sacrifice, will give us that fruit of the blessed cross, which is Himself.
 - iii. He will give us this fruit in Holy Communion to eat and to give us life, “for I tell you unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” –John 6:53
 - d. What man attempted to steal in the garden was equality with God.

Notes From the Podium (cont)

- i. Here is Jesus, the very Son of God, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” – John 14:9
 - ii. The Son of the Father has come down and they give him back.
 2. “Pilate...took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this righteous man’s blood; see to it yourselves.”
 - a. But he cannot wash the blood off that easily.
 - b. He’s a coward, swayed by the crowd, he finds no reason to crucify him but he would rather do so than lose his position.
 3. “And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!”
 - a. Whether they know it or not, this is a perfect prayer.
 - i. The blood of Christ redeems us.
 - ii. The act of calling for His blood down on their heads and taking responsibility for it is the very possibility of their redemption.
 - b. “Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.”
- IV. Handing Over
 - A. All this handing over, Judas handing him over to the priests, the priests handing him over to Pilate, and Pilate handing him over to the soldiers.
 - B. “Tradere” – tradition, to handover.
 - C. Christ is the tradition, the living tradition, the one who is handed over, from the Father to us, and by our crucifixion in Christ, the living tradition once raised becomes our salvation.
- V. “Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorian, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him,”
 - A. The praetor was a guard of approximately 625 soldiers.
 - B. “Paludamentum” - a short cape/robe that hung over the shoulders that was scarlet or purple signifying royalty of the Romans.
 1. This robe was placed on Christ in mockery.
 2. Ironically, dressing him in royal arraignment was an unconscious admission of who He was, The King.
 - C. Adam, the fallen king
 1. Christ is in the position of the suffering servant so he is Adam, the fallen king.
 2. Adam was originally given dominion.
 3. Seeing Christ as the object of mockery with thorns around his head as a crown and a reed in his hand as his scepter of power, we see what has become of Adam.
 - a. He is subject to the forces of evil.
 - b. He has given himself into the dominion of Satan.
 4. Our Lord hands himself over into the position of Adam himself, without relinquishing the reality that he is the king.
 - D. “...they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”
 1. Evil, itself, is transformed by our Lord into something that manifests the truth.
 2. In kneeling before Him and saying “Hail, King of the Jews.” They are doing something that hasn’t been done since the magi knelt before him and hailed Him as the king.
 3. The very act of seeming adoration becomes the worst act of blasphemy, when done by a person who wants the opposite of adoration.
- VI. “And they...led him away to crucify him.”
 - A. Simon the Cyrene
 1. “...this man they compelled to carry his cross.”

Notes From the Podium (cont)

2. Odd that the man chosen for this task had likely not heard our Lord's injunction to "take up your cross and follow me" yet he is the only one who literally did.
- B. Our Lord embraces the Cross
 1. Often we think of taking up the cross as someone giving us something, something we must bear.
 2. The whole motive of the crucifixion is our salvation, which our Lord desires.
 3. Both the cross and our Lord's humanity are instruments of salvation.
 - a. The two become wedded.
 - b. His blood (by virtue of His humanity) will seep into the lifeless wood of the cross and makes it grow, makes it fruitful again with life.
 - i. This is why we often see images of the cross with branches sprouting from it bearing fruit.
 - ii. This bearing fruit is symbolic of the Christian fruits of faith, hope and charity.
 4. It is not done by resignation but by an embrace.
 - a. Christ embraced the cross and so must we.
 - b. On Good Friday we kneel down and kiss the cross, an instrument of torture, because it has become an instrument of our salvation.
 5. The sign of the cross
 - a. We bless ourselves with the sign of the cross
 - b. We mark things with the cross,
 - c. In baptism and confirmation we mark the forehead with the sign of the cross; as a sign that we are redeemed, that we belong to Christ.
 - d. We love the cross, not just the one that our Lord died upon but our individual cross, united to Him, as the means with which to love him.
- C. "They offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; ... he would not drink it."
 1. A drink used to dull the pain is refused; our Lord wanted to feel every nerve, desiring to embrace this pain of love.
 2. None of His body or even His soul is spared.
 - a. His soul suffered in the garden, as He took to Himself every sin of every man and woman that had ever or would ever exist.
 - b. His whole body suffered as He endured the scourging, as His face is struck and spat upon, as His head is pierced with thorns, as His shoulders, back and legs bear the weight of the cross, as his hands and feet are nailed, and as His side is pierced.
- VII. "And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there."
 - A. Why to keep watch? –Are they afraid someone might steal Him?
 1. There is a recollection here that in the beginning man sought to "steal" equality with God.
 2. So here again we see nervousness that maybe someone will attempt steal Him, who not only is equal to God, but is God.
 3. Perhaps once again someone will attempt to take that fruit now that it has been placed back onto the tree.
 4. We're going to see it again when after his death he is laid in the tomb they want to post guards lest his disciples come and steal him.
 - B. "...over his head they put the charge... "This is Jesus the King of the Jews."
 1. Once again the truth is manifested even in evil.
 2. "quot scriptsi scriptsi," - "what I have written I have written"
 3. He is king of the Jews and by virtue of that, king of the world.

Notes From the Podium (cont)

- C. “Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.” – Another reference to thievery.
- VIII. “Those who passed by derided him... “
 - A. “You, who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself!”
 - B. “If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”
 - C. “If?” –A word used by Satan in the desert to cast doubt into our Lord’s mind in an effort to come between the Son and the Father.
 - 1. The only one between the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit who is love.
 - 2. Anyone else who attempts to come between the Father and the Son receives a rebuke.
 - a. Peter receives the rebuke, “Get behind me Satan” because he literally stands between our Lord and the cross.
 - b. In the rebuke, Peter is also told to fall in behind Jesus.
 - 3. Now we hear this “if” coming from the crowd, the chief priest and scribes, and even the robbers crucified next to Him.
 - a. An effort to create doubt at a time when He is experiencing in his own soul the eclipse of God that took place in man by virtue of original sin.
 - b. The chief priest and scribes mock him with Psalm 22 adding the word “if”.
 - c. The heart of all this temptation is to cause Jesus (the new Adam) to doubt that the Father desires Him. (Just as the serpent caused Adam to doubt God’s love).
 - i. But we have heard the Father at Jesus’ baptism and at the transfiguration, say, and “this is my beloved Son in whom I delight”.
 - ii. The crucifixion is the most perfect manifestation of His love, that he loved the world so much that he gave his only Son away.
- IX. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.” (Impossible because Passover was held at the new moon.)
- X. “About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lama sabach-thani?”
 - A. “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”
 - 1. He picks up the taunts, “if God desires you let him save you”, from Psalm 22.
 - a. He is experiencing in his human nature, the eclipse of God, while at the same time beholding God which makes the suffering all the more intense.
 - b. He is, at once, beholding the face of his Father and experiencing what we have experienced as the eclipse of God by virtue of sin.
 - c. This eclipse of God creates a darkness that even creation manifests by an eclipse.
 - 2. This cry is the last gasp of the old Adam, for the Father will come to save him.
 - B. “...let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” -They thought “Eli” which sounds like Elijah was the one he was calling on.
- XI. “And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.”
 - A. He exhaled, gave over, willfully, his life.
 - B. “And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two,”
 - 1. This was a sixty foot curtain that was a handbreadth in thickness.
 - 2. To say that it was ripped from the top to the bottom is as if to say that no human hand could do this.
 - 3. With the veil rent asunder, man has access to the Father.
 - 4. As our Lord’s side is pierced, breaking the veil of his humanity (his body) causing blood and water to flow and giving us sacramental life, so too the breaking of the veil manifests our access to the Father as His children.

Notes From the Podium (cont)

- C. “The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared too many.”
 - 1. Our Lord is called the first born, the first raised from the dead.
 - 2. It is most likely that this is a manifestation of Him raising the dead and allowing those raised to manifest themselves without bodies yet and taking them to be with Him.
 - 3. He said to the thief, “this day you will be with me in paradise”.
 - D. “When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe, and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”
 - 1. Tradition holds that the centurion’s name is “Petronius”.
 - 2. He recognizes that Jesus is the Son of God not only of the physical signs taking place such as rocks splitting, an earthquake, an eclipse, and saints rising, but also by the manifestation of love (we know this from Mark’s gospel).
 - 3. He sees the Father in the Son.
 - E. “There were also many women there, looking on from afar, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him; among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.”
 - 1. Here Mary Magdalene makes her first appearance in Matthew’s gospel.
 - 2. The mother of the sons of Zebedee is the one who had asked that her sons, James and John, be able to sit at the right and left side of Jesus. -Will she still ask it now?
- XII. Jesus’ Body is laid in the tomb.
- A. Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for Jesus’ body and Pilate consented.
 - 1. “Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud,” -How like the Mass when we take that lifeless body of bread and lay it on clean linen awaiting it to rise in transubstantiation.
 - 2. Joseph “...laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulcher.”
 - B. “...they went and made the sepulcher secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.”
 - 1. Another projection of thievery.
 - 2. They put a seal on it; most likely of the empire so that if the seal is broken they will know that someone has come and taken him.
 - 3. But, as we shall see, the seal will not be broken.