

Good Friday Noon (2018)

John 19 23When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, 24so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, “They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.” So the soldiers did these things,

In the Name of Jesus.

The world; our sin; and the Lamb of God that takes it away.

The darkness, which men love; the Light that shines despite the darkness; Light darkness cannot overcome, or understand, or deal with at all!

We, His own that did not receive Him; the Word made flesh, Who dwelt among us; and by His undeserved attachment that we can always count on—grace and truth!—despite the world, despite the ruler of this world, despite ourselves, He GIVES us the authority to BE children of God: born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Those are some of the many ways Saint John cheers us on and brings us to life as we read about the soldiers dividing and gambling for the clothes of the Christ.

What a devastating judgment on us; and ALL of us! And what JOY that our different birth from above comes as freely as the wind, as the Spirit of the Father, as the water of Holy Baptism!

Jesus had removed His clothing once before: the night before, to do the work of the lowest of the low and wash the disciples' feet: 'He loved them to the end!'

So, He is already as low as He can get when the soldiers confiscate His clothing—which He will not need anymore—and throw dice to their god of luck to add a little more amusement to their day. That's what they do!

CLEAR PROOF that adults must NEVER leave little children—without a moral compass—alone with each other for any length of time! Someone is going to get hurt, or worse.

The execution squad invested in playing 'dress-up!' And games! Games! Without any sense that they—we!—

are all just dolls that belong to the doll-Maker—and HE will dress us up as HE sees fit, WHEN He sees fit!

Thank God! For the water and the Spirit—the PLEDGE of Christ’s washing of us is a clothing WE cannot get hold of or put on or—praise the Lord!—take OFF! And we have no share in that low man high on the cross, unless HE goes through it all for ALL! He loses His clothing to cover us with Himself for certain!

So that when rude men—these are the normal types of brutes every society enlists for such things!—when the high and holy people, or the high and unholy, hand over their dirty deeds to be done by the regular Joe, the child of God is raised from the tyranny of the garden we children of Satan have made for ourselves, to the Garden of God. Adam and Eve first played ‘dress-up’ when they were evicted from Eden. Their Boy reversed everything to open Paradise again, for just anyone who rejoices at what He has done.

I feel as if I want to waive some sort of red flag or blow an air horn or something on Good Friday—not to be rude, my dear children of God; but to jolt MYSELF and the rest of y’all out of any sort of hero-worship and hero-pity when we hear about the crucifixion of our Lord, even the clothing bit. Jesus was NOT the first, nor was He the last, to have people hovering over His still-warm corpse, like

vultures, waiting to pick at the scraps. Y'all were born into families not much different from the one I was born into.

This eye-witness account was recorded so that we would REJOICE that THIS ONE is God's anointed King for His kingdom, our Kingdom. REJOICING is the closest word I understand to BELIEVING. It also saves us from the nastiness of religious people who turn BELIEVING into a work worth a prize. Beware of any Christian's BELIEVING that does not make JOY spring to life!

This account was written to lay bare not just what was done to our King; but to lay bare, to turn the lights on: what others do to us, daily and much; AND...WHAT...WE...ALL...DO...TO...ONE...ANOTHER, daily and much.

SO...THAT...NO...MAN...WILL...DESPAIR!

Not of HIMSELF! NOR, despair of the next regular guy, who's just doing general living, when he reduces others—YOU!—to what he can get from you.

THIS CHRIST, THIS King of the Jews, is King FOR those who are REDUCED to what others can get from them; AND, He is King for the world! Even for those who

DO the reducing! (What have YOU done for ME lately?
How often do you want to crawl under a rock to hide from
view?)

Who should smile at that, rejoice, believe, live? You;
me; whoever!

You are the baptized! And until Christ returns for our
eyes, He rules us by His Spirit, His Word, in His Church!

And He lays down His LAW. Law! Ha! Actually a
two-sided Law—(Actually, it's the Gospel!)

'You cannot count on the One the Father has sent TOO
MUCH! So rejoice! Trust! Rise!'

'AND—the next man IMAGINES that he has free
will, and he will do as HE pleases, while all the time the
Doll-Maker above is the One who dresses each one as HE
fancies! So it is NOT up to you or me to lay down any
final word of judgment on any man; any man.'

We are FREED, my dear ones—the WEIGHT
removed from us, what the Word call 'sin'!—that terrible
burden of being OFFENDED that people ARE what they

ARE!

‘So, that’s what the soldiers did!’

Yup! And, ‘So, that’s what God did!’

The Spirit works so freely, that others may snatch away from us **WHATEVER** we wrap ourselves in: works, boasts, possessions, smarts, gushing feelings, any sort of ‘dress-up.’

But God sees us dead already and alive, by the Garden in which His Son lay. He pierces the darkness and sees our sin and takes it away. He animates the dead—**AND, HE** gives **NEW** Life, God-life, to those who find no final place in this children’s garden of death we make for ourselves.

Smile through your tears, dear friends! Be glad, while sad over the death of your King! For this is what **HE** did, to **GIVE...US...EVERYTHING** God is!

Behold, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world! Amen.