

Mark 15: 1-5

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. ²Pilate asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' He answered him, 'You say so.' ³Then the chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴Pilate asked him again, 'Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.' ⁵But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

Meditation: The silence of Jesus. Why? Why was Jesus silent? Was it in order to fulfil the scripture: 'He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.' (Isaiah 53:7)? Does this add to Jesus' innocence and purity in contrast to the wickedness and blindness of the ruling officials? Does it offer depth to the fact that the answer to Pilate's question is one that anyone who encounters this man, anyone who reads this gospel account, must answer for themselves? Whatever the answer we come to, the question and underlying accusation against Jesus are palpably clear: Is Jesus the king of the Jews, the king of the world, the king of life as it is given to be lived?

We live in a world where there is so much talking and very little listening. We live in a world of much noise and little silence. We live in a world where leaders know how to talk their way in and out of things, sell their visions with their words and the decisive actions that follow, whether there is truth and right behind the words or not. We live in a world where there is much falsity, façade, pretense and lack of authenticity.

Why is Jesus silent? We have considered some suggestions. But ultimately, it raises a core existential question for each of us: What does Jesus represent for you and me? Is it truth? Is it the ultimate measure of what it means to be human at our best? Is it about grace and compassion even when it means we have to absorb and displace the negativity without throwing it back onto others and the world in some way? Is this a victory greater than just getting what we want and being in control?

Prayer: We must confess, O God, that even though we understand some things in our lives and in the world, there are many things we do not understand. Even as we know why we do what we do and are as we are, there are things about ourselves we can't quite comprehend or fully know. And yet, if we follow your Jesus and he becomes ours, we believe we are loved fully, completely and without measure. And it's out of such love that we are called to live, O God. And yet the fears and hungers that drive us are hard to sort out, tame and direct in life-giving ways. We act and react and regret and justify all too much in our lives. Cleanse, purify and strip us down to our core, O God. May we surrender that core to you, even as we do not fully comprehend it. We are your creatures, made lovingly in the uniqueness that we are. And even as we are broken, we are created to journey toward wholeness. May this journey with Jesus bring us closer to such a destiny; Amen.