

Mark 15: 42-47

42 When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 44 Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. 45 When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. 46 Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where the body was laid.

Meditation: Here we have one of those secret followers of Jesus who is challenged to make public his allegiance to Jesus. Even though Jesus is dead, Joseph demonstrates his faithfulness by undertaking the burial of Jesus' body with all the necessary preparations and procedures. What are we told about him? He was a respected member of the Council, probably a Pharisee, and therefore a man of religious status. Second, he was one 'who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God.' Thus he was a sincere seeker who hoped that Jesus was the one. In spite of any doubts he may have had, he kept an open mind about Jesus and was committed to him. Another group of people who are important in the gospel account are the women, named and unnamed who stay with Jesus and follow his burial to completion. Even though Jesus puts the most time and effort with his group of twelve, in the end, it is his secret and less significant followers who are most faithful, even if they do not understand it all.

Do you have this thirst for God as Joseph had? A hunger to know and understand, to go deeper, to be ever more authentic, real and grounded in a more transcendent mystery we call 'God.'? Do you desire a richer transparency before God with all the layers of falsity between you and God and the world purged from your soul, layers weighing you down, clouding your vision, distracting your seeking, keeping you from being filled with the fullness of divine love?

And what about faithfulness, perseverance, the courage and tenacity to commit to the journey, to commit to others, to be there in good times and bad, to value the long journey with people rather than the momentary splashes of attention?

In this time of Covid-19, this time of protests, this time of outrage at injustices, this time of re-evaluation of values... will this just be a moment in time in your life or a new beginning of a new chapter of your life?

Prayer: Lord God, I know that there are many types of people that belong to your kingdom. Some are quiet yet consistent and faithful disciples. Others are bold and confident, articulate and outspoken, but also sometimes unstable and inconsistent. Wherever I may find myself, give me assurance that I am yours and that who you have made me to be can be useful to your purposes. Make me a channel of your grace and peace. Make me a genuine and authentic witness of your Christ so that others may see

you in me and give you the glory. Give me a greater clarity of vision about my place in your kingdom and my purpose in this world as your disciple. Give me greater hunger and thirst that will not be satisfied with less when it comes to the spiritual, with faithfulness and courage for the journey wherever it will lead; Amen.