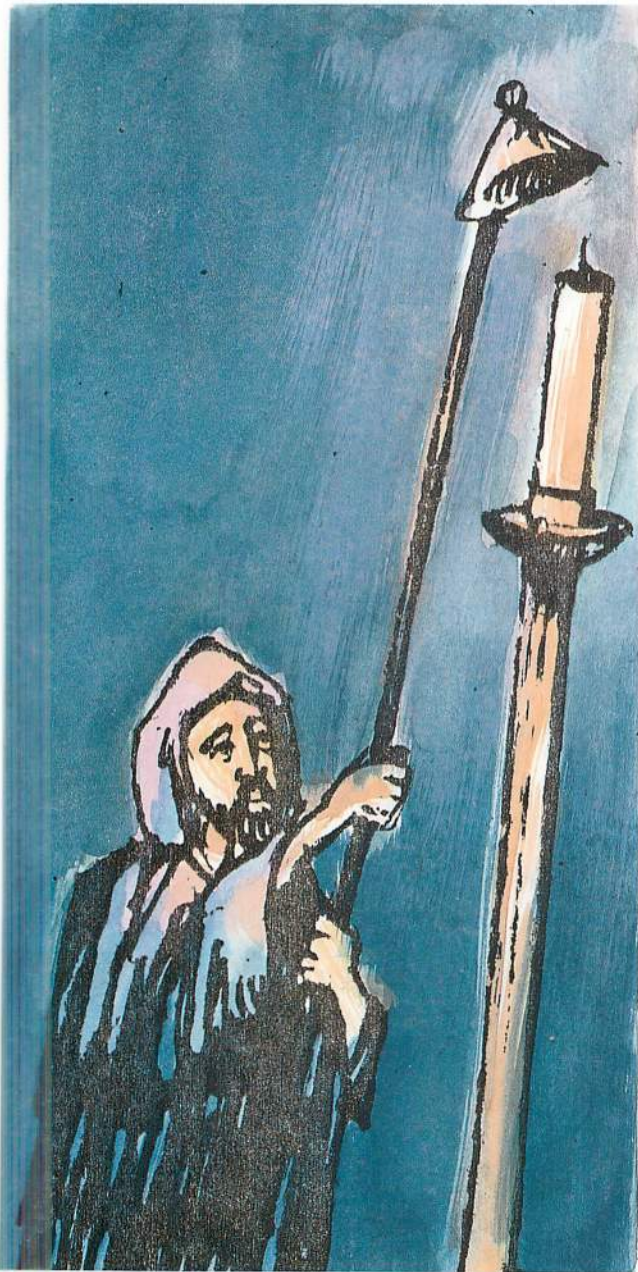


Khavaroom

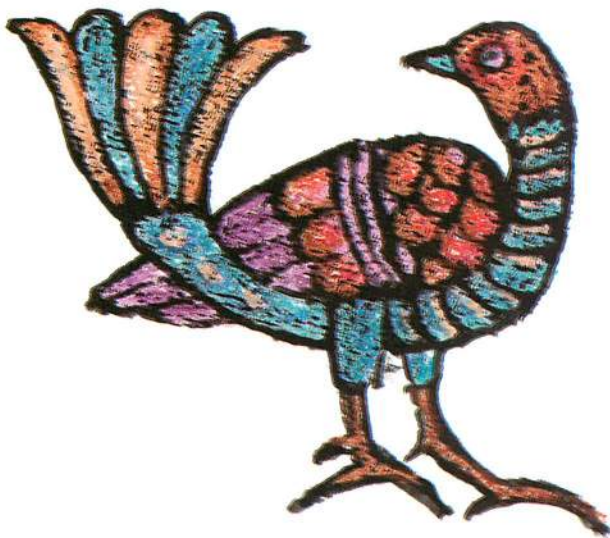
John 16:20-24



Khavaroom Service

The late service, *Khavaroom* (Darkness), held on Thursday evening of Holy Week, is a vigil in memory of the last sleepless night of our Lord on earth; his betrayal, arrest, torture, passion and trial. We are dramatically reminded of Christ's suffering for us.

Our Church Fathers have provided us with a service that truly captures the agony and pain that Christ endured for our sake. During *Khavaroom*, the church is in complete darkness except for 12 lighted candles. One candle is black to symbolize Judas Iscariot. Six sets of laments are chanted, each followed by a gospel reading depicting Christ's betrayal, imprisonment, torture, trial, sentence, and his crucifixion. At the end of each chant, two candles are extinguished. As the sixth lament is ended, the church is in complete darkness and the hymn of crucifixion (*Daradzyl*) is sung. The hymn depicts the final hour of Jesus on the cross and tells us how Christ was given vinegar, instead of water, to quench his thirst; and how his side was pierced by the spear of the soldier. As his mother watched, the "heavens roared and the ground heaved."



Scriptural Foundation

Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss in the Garden of Gethsemane (See Unit III: Session 2). After the Temple soldiers, servants of the high priests, and armed men had bound Jesus, they led him to Annas, who had been High Priest for some years.

Annas interrogated Jesus about his disciples and his doctrine. Jesus answered: "Why do you ask about these things? For three years, I have taught openly everywhere; question rather those who have heard what I spoke to them." For this reply, they struck him on the face. (John 18:19-24) Annas sent Jesus back to his son-in-law Caiaphas, who was at that time holding office as High Priest. (John 18:12, 13, 24)

Although false evidence was brought against him which he would not answer, it was obvious that he was innocent. (Matthew 26:59-63, and Mark 14:55-61)

Against all legal procedures, the High Priest put our Lord under solemn oath and asked him whether he was the Son of God. "I am," answered Jesus. On this reply, the Sanhedrin condemned him to death. (Matthew 26:63-64, Mark 14:61-64 and Luke 22:66-71) Then the guards and soldiers mocked Jesus, spat in his face, and struck him. They blindfolded him, beat him on the head, and asked: "Prophecy to us. Who is it that struck you?" (Matthew 26:65-68, Mark 14:65 and Luke 22:63-65)

The Jews had no right to execute the sentence of death without permission of the Roman governor. Early the next morning, they led him to Pilate who questioned Jesus and decided that he was guilty of no crime. When, however, he heard that he was a Galilean, he sent him to Herod, governor of Galilee, who happened to be in Jerusalem for the Passover. (John 18:28-38, Luke 23:1-7)

When Jesus did not comply with Herod's demand to perform a miracle, he and his court took reprisals on Jesus. They mocked him, treated him with contempt, and finally sent him back to Pilate, after dressing him in the white garments of fools. (Luke 23:8-11)

Pilate tried to have Jesus released as the prisoner given freedom during the Passover but the crowds demanded the release of Barabbas instead. (Luke 23:13-25) Then Pilate had Jesus scourged (John 19:1), after washing his hands to signify he was not in agreement with the verdict. (Matthew 27:24-26)

History tells us what bitterly cruel torture scourging was. Scourges were made of thongs ending in small metal balls or knuckle bones. Jesus was dragged to the courtyard, stripped, tied to a column, his arms raised above his head and his wrists bound. The number of blows was fixed at thirty-nine.

Then the soldiers released the bonds that tied Jesus to the column and made him sit down in the courtyard of the Praetorium, panting for breath, covered with blood, his body racked with pain.

Around his shoulders they threw an old legionary's "chlamys" — a short cloak; they thrust a stick into his hand; then they carefully wove, from the branches of a shrub that had thorns longer and sharper than those of the acacia, a sort of helmet; this they forced onto his head as a crown and bound it in place with twisted rushes. Then began that tragic scene of derisive homage. One by one they came to bend the knee before him, and say, "Hail, king of the Jews!" They spat on that face, pallid and disfigured by blows; they took the reed from his hands and beat on that headgear of thorns. (Mark 15:16-20; Matthew 27:27-30)

At this point Pilate made his last attempt to save Jesus. He led him, in that condition, before the crowds, and said, "Ecce homo!" (Behold, the man.) There was a moment's silence at the sight of that now unrecognizable face, then the crowd redoubled its cries, "Crucify him, take him away!" Before the growing tumult Pilate gave way; like a coward, he delivered Jesus up to be crucified. (John 19:4-6)

Sorrow Turns to Joy

Just as Christ's suffering turned to joy, so will ours. Christian joy will never be taken

away for it is perfect and complete. In Christian joy, the pain which went before is forgotten. Just as the mother forgets the pain in the wonder of the child, the martyr forgets the agony in the glory of heaven. When we are fully with Christ, the time of questions will be gone and the time of answers will have come. (John 16:20-24) There will be a new relationship with God. That new relationship is made possible by Jesus; it exists in his name. It is because of God the Son and what he suffered for us that our joy is indestructible and perfect, that our knowledge is complete, that the new way to our Father is opened to us. (John 16:25-28)

Conclusion

During the last hours that Christ was in the flesh, there was a gradual separation from all that was dear to him; Judas betrayed him; the other disciples deserted him; Peter denied him; the Jewish tribunal convicted him; the Roman court rejected him; he turned his mother over to John; and for one awful moment on the cross, he felt forsaken by God. Christ's death on the cross was an offering sufficient for all the sins of men, and in love he waits with open arms for us to return his love. Thus, we, too, can turn our sorrow into joy. This is the message of *Khavaroom*.

DARKNESS

After reading at least one of the following gospel accounts, write your reaction to our Lord's suffering from his viewpoint; from the viewpoint of his mother; Peter's; Pi-

late's or the Sanhedrin's.

Matthew 26:57-68, Matthew 27:1,2,11-32

Mark 24:53-65, Mark 15:1-21

Luke 22:54, 63-71; Luke 23:1-11, 13-26

John 18:12;13;19-24; 28-40, John 19:1-16

Christian Joy and Service

In John 17:13, our Lord revealed that all he was saying was designed to bring his followers joy. He also offered his followers warning because we are different in our values and standards from the world. (John 17:14) But there is Christian joy in facing the hostility of the world. Christianity was never meant to withdraw a person from life

but to equip him better for it. The Christian must never desire to abandon the world, but always desire to win it. (John 17:14)

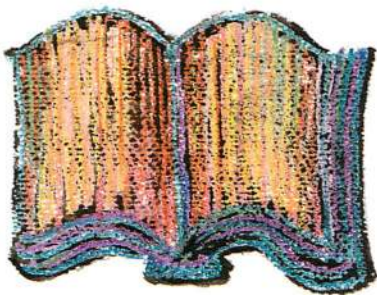
God has chosen us and dedicated us for his special service. That special service is that we should love and obey him and should bring others to do the same. He has not left us to carry out that great task in our own strength, but out of his grace and the fruits of the Holy Spirit, he fits us for our task, if we place our lives in his hands. (John 17:16-19)

Have you ever felt like staying away from some place because of someone who is jealous of you and hurts you? _____

As a Christian, how are we to respond to a situation like that?

How can we have the strength to be ourselves and not let others determine how we are to think and act?

At-Home-Work



I Go over today's lesson and Bible readings with your family throughout the week.

*Monday Matthew 21:18-22
Wednesday Matthew 26:3-13
Friday John 16:25-28*

*Tuesday John 16:20-24; 17:13
Thursday John 13:1-11
Saturday John 17:13-19*

II Read and study next week's lesson.