Good Friday
2015

On this most powerful and somber of nights, I trust that the Word of God has already enriched your soul with an abundance of spiritual images. I’ve always struggled with how we could call this Friday “Good”.

We have just heard that by the bruises of our Lord Jesus, we are healed. He is the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him. His suffering is our hope.

As the Son of God, He who was without sin, took upon Himself the burden of our sins and allowed Himself to be led to the slaughter like a lamb. Oppressed, afflicted, He did not open His mouth to defend Himself against His aggressors. *What Jesus endured in love for us is why we call this Friday: Good.*
The mental and physical pains that the Lord Jesus suffered for each and everyone of us just cannot be measured. What did He feel in knowing what his mother was about to witness? How did He feel when He knew He had to leave her alone in a world that was surrounded by wolves and darkness, a world that was about to murder her beloved Son? What Jesus endured in love for us is why we call this Friday: Good.

Just the thought of wearing a crown of thorns with needles piercing the skin of our scalp is enough to frighten us. It is enough to have some of us deny that we are Christians so we can avoid the suffering of such pain.

But Jesus suffered more than that. Forty lashes on his naked back…. It must have been completely raw,… cut and bleeding. In pain and weakness, He carried the heavy wooden Cross to the place of His crucifixion on shoulders so bruised that the pain must have been excruciating. He endured mockery, even being slapped in the face by
one who did not like His answer. *What Jesus endured in love for us is why we call this Friday: Good.*

Some of us *cannot* associate with the crucifixion *but we can* associate with a slap in the face because we may have witnessed such an incident during our lives. An action like that is offensive. It stays in our mind for a long time, sometimes for life. Just the thought of Jesus having been slapped in the face is enough to raise our blood pressure. It makes us want to reach out and to slap that person right back. But that is not the Christian way.

And to add to all this suffering, Jesus had nails pierce His hands and feet, fixing them to the wood in the same way we nail a picture to the wall. Can we imagine what that would be like? It is just unthinkable! It is cruel, disgusting, heartless. *What Jesus endured in love for us is why we call this Friday: Good.*
When we leave here tonight, let us not forget what Jesus endured for us. Let us never forget it! Each time we look at a crucifix, let us remember that the look on the face of Jesus was not a look of pain and suffering. It was a look of love, a love for each and everyone of us. Indeed: *What Jesus endured in love for us is why we call this Friday: Good*. 