



## The Cathedral of St. Andrew - Honolulu

### Sermon: Year C – Good Friday – April 19, 2019: The Darkness

One line sticks out as we read the Passion of Jesus in John this afternoon, the line that says:

Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter was also standing with them and warming himself.

Evidently, it was a cold night. Cold and dark. And not only was it cold and dark outside, but also cold and dark inside Peter's spirit, down to the core of his soul. He denies knowing Jesus. He's feeling guilty. He's feeling fearful. Jesus is about to die. It's cold and dark inside and outside the soul.

And even though it's just past noon, today you and I are also in darkness. Four months ago we lit the wreath of Advent as we waited in anticipation for hope to come into the world. And that it did. In the form of a babe. The dawn of messianic salvation was upon us. And each week of Advent the light got brighter and brighter, until we lit the candle in the center, the paschal candle, the Easter symbol of resurrection.

Where is that candle today? Where is that flame? It's nowhere to be found. We're in total darkness.

And how does that mirror the darkness of our lives? Look at the world we live in today. Students get shot up in high schools, young children are separated from their parents at our borders. We have supremacist marches in our streets. 50 people go to worship at their mosque and are shot to death because of their religious beliefs.

And in our own town, we also see darkness. A student across the way at Queen Emma Square dies in a kayak accident when he's only five years old. We have people living on our streets. Drug use is on the rise. And two weeks ago, coming back to work from lunch on Alakea Street, I turn to my right and noticed that someone is huddled up in a storefront doorway fast asleep, only to look closer and realize that he's died.

And then there's our life in the church. Our budget is tight. Pledges are down. Our staff is bare bones and we do the best we can. We have conflict and disagreements. Our electric bill is on the rise.

And then there's you and me. We have our problems. We have our struggles. Financial challenges. Loss of jobs. Struggles with addiction. Broken relationships. Family members with devastating illnesses. The deaths of loved ones. It's right here. I hear about it all the time and Lord knows I experience more than one of these things myself from time to time.

And if Peter is anything like us, who can blame him for his feelings of fear and self-doubt? Who can blame him for denying Christ. You and I might've done the exact same thing. It's all over. The light in the paschal candle is gone and darkness wins.

## Good Friday –April 19, 2019, cont’d.

Or does it. The Passion says:

Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter was also standing with them and warming himself.

The fire is right there. And someday that fire will ignite the flame of the paschal candle, that Easter resurrection symbol of Christ. But Peter can’t see it. And even though he warms himself by it, he hardly realizes the flame is even there.

And in a world of contrasts, sometimes it takes darkness to see the light. Sometimes it takes darkness to need the light. Sometimes it takes darkness to crave the light. And difficult as it may be, perhaps for today, the darkness is where we’re called to be. It’s Good Friday. It’s a time of darkness, the darkness of the inner spirit, the darkness of our stories, the darkness of our inner lives, the darkness as we sit with Jesus and the darkness of our shadows as he dies on the cross and lies in the tomb.

So for now, we let it be. We enter into the story of Jesus and experience it for ourselves. We sit in the darkness—and we wait for the light to come.

*Amen.*