

## **Monsignor Daniel Pilon—Mark 15:42-47**

<sup>42</sup> When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, <sup>43</sup> 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. <sup>44</sup> Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. <sup>45</sup> When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. <sup>46</sup> 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. <sup>47</sup> Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where the body was laid.

1. Story of the Passion often seems almost depressing
  - a. Though Jesus is Son of God, no one seems to recognize Him
  - b. He is betrayed, denied, mocked and tortured
2. The end of the Gospel of Mark introduces us to the power of the Cross
  - a. We are introduced to a man described as a member of the Council, the group that spearheaded the betrayal and death of Jesus
  - b. Gospel of Mark emphasizes that he was a respected member of the council
  - c. He was probably wealthy, since he owned a tomb that had hewn out of rock
    - i. Detail emphasizes that this tomb is not just simply another cave
    - ii. He had to pay workers to carve a tomb, using hand tools
    - iii. So it must have been rather valuable and expensive
3. Another detail that seems important is that he is waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God
  - a. At first seem like an ironic detail
  - b. When Jesus was at the height of his popularity with crowds following Him
  - c. Would have been easy to see Jesus as the agent of God
  - d. People were ready to crown Jesus as king
  - e. Expectations had been raised
4. But now Jesus looks like just another failure
  - a. Would not appear to be much of a king
  - b. Executed by the Romans with the encouragement of the high priests
  - c. Perhaps even the council Joseph belongs to
  - d. Abandoned by his followers and friends

5. Joseph sees something on the cross
  - a. Almost like a changed man
  - b. Boldly goes to Pilate to ask for the body
  - c. Risky business, might Pilate think he is part of some conspiracy and have him killed
  - d. Might even seem possible Joseph just a Jewish do-gooder
    - i. Teaching of Jewish faith place on obligation to bury the dead
6. Joseph goes beyond simply being a just Jewish man
  - a. By wrapping body of Jesus in a white cloth, he is making himself unclean by having contact with a dead body
  - b. He will not be able to celebrate the Passover because he will be required to undergo several days of ritual washings
  - c. Even further he lays the body of Jesus in his expensive tomb
  - d. Then he rolls the stone across the front
  - e. Somehow Joseph is able to look beyond the scandal of Jesus death on the cross
  - f. He chooses to express his affection for Jesus despite great risk and cost to himself
  - g. He is able to see something in Jesus on the cross that many fail to see
7. Joseph sees what we are called to see
  - a. The ugliness of the cross as a symbol of capital punishment is transformed for us
  - b. As St. Paul says Christ crucified is a stumbling block for Jews and folly for Gentiles
  - c. But for us who believe the cross is more than a pretty piece of jewelry
  - d. It is the very throne of our Savior
  - e. We know that through the cross Jesus has absorbed all our sins and nailed them to the tree
  - f. Because of the cross Jesus has won forgiveness and new life for us
  - g. We are called to have affection for Jesus broken body, because it will soon be raised up
  - h. Through our witness to the Resurrection of Jesus, we have hope that God is leading us into His kingdom
  - i. We are confident that he will raise up our own broken bodies and spirits and give us the joy of seeing God face to face.