

March 25, 2016, Good Friday, *Jn. 18, 1—19, 42*, by r.j.tusky
**FORGIVE them, for They Do Not Know... What They
are Doing.**

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time, a man was walking in the woods one day with a heart heavy from grief. As he thought about his life this day, he knew many things were not right. He thought about all those who had lied about him & distorted everything he said... back when he had a job.

His thoughts turned to those who had stolen his things and cheated him. He remembered family that had passed on. His mind turned to the illness he had, one with no known cure. His soul was filled with anger, resentment, and frustration.

Standing there this day, searching for answers he could not find and knowing all else had failed him, he knelt at the base of an old oak tree to seek the one he knew would always be there. With tears in his eyes, he prayed:

“Lord, You have done wonderful things for me in this life. You have told me to do many things for You, and happily, I obeyed. Today, you have told me to forgive. I am sad, Lord, because I cannot, I don't know how. It is not fair, Lord. I didn't deserve these wrongs done against me and I shouldn't have to forgive. As perfect as Your way is Lord, this one thing I cannot do. I don't know how to forgive. My anger & hurt are so deep, Lord; I fear I may not hear You but, I pray You teach me to do the one thing I cannot do: Teach me to forgive.”

As he knelt there in the quiet shade of that old oak tree, he felt something fall onto his shoulder. He opened his eyes. Out of the corner of one eye, he saw something red on his shirt. He could not turn to see what it was because, where the oak tree had been, was a large square piece of wood in the ground. He raised his head and saw two feet held to the wood with a large spike through them.

He raised his head more, and tears came to his eyes, as he saw Jesus hanging on a cross. He saw spikes in His hands, a gash in His side, a torn and battered body, deep thorns sunk into His head. Finally, he saw the suffering and pain on His precious face. As their eyes met, the man's tears turned to sobbing, and Jesus began to speak.

"Have you ever told a lie?" He asked.

The man answered - "Yes, Lord."

"Have you ever been given too much change and kept it?"

The man answered - "Yes, Lord."

And the man sobbed more and more.

"Have you ever taken something from work that wasn't yours?" Jesus asked.

And the man answered, "Yes, Lord."

"Have you ever sworn, using my Father's name in vain?"

The man, crying now, answered - "Yes, Lord."

As Jesus asked many more times, "Have you ever?"

The man's crying became uncontrollable, for he could only answer - "Yes, Lord."

Then Jesus turned His head from one side to the other, and the man felt something fall on his other shoulder. He looked and saw that it was the blood of Jesus. When he looked back up, his eyes met those of Jesus, and there was a 'look of love' the man had never seen or known before.

Jesus said, "I didn't deserve this either, but I forgive you."

It may be hard to see how you're going to get through something, but when you look back in life, you realize how true this statement is.

If God brings you to it - He will bring you through it.

If you remember nothing else about this homily, be sure to remember this:

When Jesus died on the cross, he was thinking of you!

May Almighty God, in His inscrutable LOVE, bless you, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!