

**The Last Words – Good Friday 2007**

***“I am thirsty” (I thirst)***

**John 19. 28**

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scriptures), “*I am thirsty*” (*I thirst*). A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop, and held it to his mouth.

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If you have ever been with someone close to death, you will know that a sip of water or the gentle moistening of the lips is often the last service we can give to the dying.....

It is approaching the ninth hour. Jesus has been hanging on the cross for six hours. Jesus is aware that **his** life is drawing to a close. The combination of

- Jesus' loss of blood,
- the unnatural position of the body with the extreme tension of hands and feet,
- the overstretched muscles,
- the wounds exposed to air leading to the increasing inflammation,
- the swelling of the blood vessels
- the headache from the crown of thorns, and **sheer exhaustion** –
- **all these would have produced a raging thirst in Jesus’ pain wracked, dehydrated body**

Jesus' cry, "I thirst," was not a polite request for a glass of water. No, **it was a cry of agony – a cry of deep need**. Jesus' thirst while hanging on the cross for us showed the reality and intensity of his physical suffering and it shocks and distresses us.

- After all. It was **Jesus** who offered ‘living water’ to the Samaritan woman at the well and saying: ‘Whoever drinks the water that I give will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life’.

**Yet, here Jesus himself cries out that he is thirsty!**

He was physically thirsty – of that there is no doubt. But Jesus' deepest, most profound thirst was spiritual –

- thirsting after his Father, from whom he felt separated as he hung on the cross paying the penalty for our sins,
- and a thirst, a divine yearning for souls, for the people he loved – and loves – you and me.

The soldiers give him a drink of sour wine.

What is our response? What do **we** offer him?

We see Jesus on the cross in the suffering of the world, and we hear him cry out in thirst. Our response is not just a matter of believing in Christ; it is about serving Christ in the thirst of the world.

Have we given him the drink he yearns for? That is the sobering question we need to ask ourselves.

(Let us pray)

O God, on the cross your Son Jesus thirsted for your presence as he neared the end of his earthly life. He thirsted for the souls of the people he loved and for whom he died.

By your great love, teach us to come closer to you, to offer ourselves to you, to serve you and be near to all who thirst for the living water that only you can offer.

**Lord in your mercy..... HEAR OUR PRAYER**