Last year on Good Friday, I was sitting in the Chapel of Repose trying to pray. You would think that on Good Friday my prayers would come easy that day, to be perfectly honest with you they were not coming at all, nothing, nada, zilch.

My prayers were not coming, because I was too focused on myself and on my problems. The reason I was focused on myself was the just the day before, I learned that the most recent endeavor to solve my unemployment had fallen through. I was too caught up in what would I do next. What would I do to survive? How could we continue to pay or bills? And on and on around in circles my mind went.

I tried everything I knew that morning to get my mind off of my troubles.

I got down on my knees at the prayer desk until I my knees could not take it anymore.

I tried centering prayer

I tried reading the Passion story in all 4 Gospels

I tried singing hymns

Everything I tried met with no success. I was just too focused on me to focused on my problems to let God speak to me.

I had promised someone that I would stay at the church until they came to pray in the Chapel so I resigned myself to just sit in silence and wallow in my misery.

As I sat there I happened to glance that the Altar and noticed something strange. The candle on the left was struggling to produce any light while the candle on the right was shining brightly.

I stared at these candles for awhile, finally something to intrude on my own thoughts. Curiosity got the better of me and I had to find out what was causing this difference in light.
I got up and went to look. At first everything seemed similar about the two candles and I just couldn’t figure out why one would burn brightly and the other wouldn’t. Just as I was prepared to go back to my seat and not worry about these silly candles I noticed it.

The candle on the left wick was burning straight down the middle of the candle. It had built walls surrounding the wick and was drowning in its own wax. The candle on the right had a small slit pointed right at the bread, wine and cross that were placed on the Altar. The wax had a chance to escape and let this candle burn brightly.

At that point I cried, I really wept. Because even though I was having trouble listening to God, God was not having trouble listening to me. All I had to do was open just a little crack to let the wax of my worries escape and God would do the rest.

Today is Good Friday, the day when God shows us through the life and death of Jesus that he has been listening and answering the prayers of humanity for all eternity, and all we have to do is open the crack and give it all to him.

Today is the day we are meant to see in stark reality in the human form of Jesus the effects that our sins have on our relationship with God.

Today is not a pretty day

Today is a day of pain and suffering

Today is a day when we are reminded of our sin

As I gaze out on the Stations of the Cross that are along the walls

I am reminded that my sins condemned Jesus to die more so than Pilate did.

I am reminded that my sins are laid across Jesus’ shoulders like the cross.

When I see the station where Jesus meets his mother, I am reminded that my sins hurt those who love me and those whom I love the most.
But I am also reminded when viewing the stations that today is a day of Love too.

When I look at the station of Veronica, I see a woman who loved our Lord so much that she risked the wrath of the Roman soldiers to wipe Jesus’ face.

When I view the station where Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem I am reminded of the love Jesus had for all especially women and children and those who have been oppressed,

And at the 12th station, the station where Jesus dies on the cross we heard in John’s Gospel Jesus’ final act of love in his human body when he looked down on his mother and the disciple who he loved and told each to love each other as he has loved them repeating his commandment of Maundy Thursday.

*When Jesus had received the wine, he said “It is finished”.*

At the time Jesus said those words, the moment was filled with too much emotion for those words to sink in and to ponder what they meant.

But later as the early Christians read John’s Gospel and heard again those words, it dawned on them just how powerful these dying words of Jesus were. John wrote his Gospel in Greek, and those last words of Jesus are just one word in Greek – *tetelestai* (*tet-tul-LES-tay*).

The expression "It is finished" or *tetelestai* was well known to them. It was a part of everyday language.

When a servant had completed a difficult job that his master had given him to do, he would say to the master – *tetelestai* - "I have overcome all the difficulties; I have done the job to the best of my ability. It is finished".

When the Jewish people went to the temple with their sacrifice, the High Priest would examine what was brought. Most likely, he didn’t speak Greek but he would use the Hebrew equivalent of *tetelestai* – meaning, "Your offering is accepted; it is perfect".

When the merchant at the market place made a sale and the money was handed over, he would say, "*tetelestai* – the deal is finished, complete. The price has been paid in full".
When an artist had finished a painting or a sculpture he would stand back and say, *tetelestai* – it is finished; there is nothing more that can be done to make this piece of art any better. This painting is complete.

When a boy recited to his father a difficult passage he had learnt from the Scriptures or a girl showed her mother the bread she had baked for the family, they would say *tetelestai* and the parents responded with, "Well done, my child, I am very proud of you."

When Jesus spoke those final words he wasn’t just saying, "This is the end of me" as if there was nothing else to do but to give in to his enemies and die.

His last words weren’t a final surrender to the power of Satan as if to say, "You have won. I’m done".

These words don’t tell us that Jesus was dead now and that’s all there is to it. He is finished and so is everything that he stood for and promised during his earthly life.

All those who heard the word *tetelestai* – the servants, those who offered sacrifices at the temple, the buyers and sellers at the market place, the artists and parents and children understood that Jesus is saying that his job of saving the world has been completed.

He has finished the task and nothing can be added to what has been done. Jesus has paid the price in full – he has cancelled all debt. His sacrifice has been a perfect one

*Tetelestai* – it is finished. Everything is complete!

Jesus died on the cross to get rid of the power of sin to condemn us. His death bridged the deep gulf caused by sin between God and us. "Salvation is finished", Jesus cried. The restoration of the broken relationship between God and humanity has been finished. The task for which God's Son came to earth has been completed.

He has won forgiveness for all people. Nothing else needs to be done. Salvation is complete. "It is finished".
Tetelestai “It is finished”

AMEN