

## **Views from the Pews: And Herod and Pilate become friends**

St Luke at Chapter 23 appears to be the only Gospel writer to record this remarkable event. He must have thought it important. It occurs at the end of the political chess game where the King of Kings has been spun back and forth over the board like a pawn, neither Herod nor Pilate appearing to want to make a decision about Jesus. Perhaps the friendship (which Luke records as ending an 'enmity' between the two) was born of a sense that the game had ended in a draw. Perhaps Herod and Pilate thought they could relax.

Alternatively, the two men grew closer as they were cornered by the crowd, who wanted a crucifixion at all costs. Perhaps they took refuge in their own guilt after having both failed to face down the mob.

Luke records the friendship as being forged 'that very day' and it might be inferred from Verse 12 that it stood the test of time.

But did it? Luke does not say. But the relationship will have been tested very quickly. Luke faithfully records the events of the first Easter Sunday. The women came running back from the tomb, they relate the words of the two men who seemed to be on guard – who reminded the women that the Son would rise on the third day. This is followed by Christ's appearance at Emmaus and his breaking bread with the disciples. Significantly, Luke ends his Gospel with the disciples' return to Jerusalem where they were 'continually in the temple blessing God'.

Herod's earnest wish to be rid of the troublemaker has come to nothing. The temple has been taken over by the disciples and other witnesses. Pilate had washed his hands of the whole problem. The threat to security was over. Imagine his shock when rumours of Christ's appearances begin to circulate among those who knew the ancient prophecies. Roman soldiers are of no use in a religious revolution that threatened to engulf Judea and beyond. It is possible that a 'blame game' begins. It must have been the other's fault. Perhaps Pilate's men failed to ensure Jesus was really dead.

And perhaps Herod had set Pilate up to fail. This is speculation of course but Luke, the 'Good Physician', tells a masterful tale of politics and psychology, which we would do well to read in detail. He makes both crucifixion and resurrection real for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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