Good Friday reflection
John 18:1-19:42
The Passion according to John
7 April 2023
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Just moments before his death, Jesus looked down on his mother, his mother's sister-in-law, and Mary of Magdala who were standing at the foot of the cross. He said: "Mother, behold your son." Then, he looked at his beloved disciple and said, "Behold, your mother." The beloved disciple then took the mother of Jesus, and presumably the other women, to his house to spare them from seeing the sword piercing the side of Jesus and witnessing his death.

This empathetic scene is unique to John. The Synoptic Gospels relate that the women were standing far off and Matthew, Mark, and Luke do not include the mother of Jesus among the women. But John puts the mother of Jesus right at the cross. He commiserates with her. Michelangelo's Pièta in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome has Mary spreading her legs out with Jesus lying limp on her lap, as if to say, parents should not have to bury their children before they themselves die, those very children who grew in the wombs of their mothers, flesh of their flesh, and of their fathers, too.

We have our own Pièta here in the east wing of our chapel transept. Let us *contemplate* Mary's suffering and bring our own troubles to her. Let us *identify* with all the parents who have lost their children *permanently* through school shootings, through illegal labor practices in warehouses in our very own country, through immigration separations, and through drug overdoses. Let us *give hope* to these parents for *we believe* that Jesus died for us to heal us, to embrace us with love.

Behold the wood of the cross

on which hangs our salvation, our wholeness and our healing,

the healing love of our God.