

political insurrection. Jesus' response, quoting Psalms 109:1 and Daniel 7:13-14, gave Caiaphas the excuse to allege that Jesus was proclaiming Himself Messiah, understood to be the return of David's kingship and therefore an act of sedition punishable by Roman execution. This explains Pilate's later insistence on questioning Jesus as to whether He was a king. It also explains why, when Jesus' responded that His kingdom was not of this world, Pilate went out to the crowd and said he found no crime in Him (John:18:33-38). It appears that Caiaphas was worried about Jesus. Perhaps he saw Jesus as a threat to the existing religious order. Perhaps he believed that if Jesus remained the Romans would cease being (relatively) tolerant of Jewish institutions. In 1990 a burial chamber was uncovered to the south of Jerusalem. In it was a stone box bearing the Aramaic inscription "Yehosef bar (son of) Qafa (Caiapha)." In the box were the bones of a man aged about 60, a woman, two children and two infants. It is believed that this tomb belonged to Caiaphas and his family. (NEXT WEEK: *The servant girl who questioned St Peter...*)

**Stephen S**

**Entrance antiphon: When he calls on me, I will answer him; I will deliver him and give him glory, I will grant him length of days.**

**First Reading: Deuteronomy 26 4-10**

**Psalm 90: Response: Be with me, O Lord, in my distress.**

**Second Reading: Romans 10 8-13**

**Gospel Acclamation: Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory! Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory!**

**Gospel: Luke 4: 1-13**

**Memorial Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.**



Christ in the Wilderness- by Moretto de Bescia

## First Sunday of Lent Sunday Cycle C, 2022

### Weekly Reflection: Minor Players in the Passion: (1) Caiaphas

According to the Jewish historian, Josephus, Caiaphas was high priest from 18-36 AD. The first Jewish high priest in history had been Aaron, who had been anointed by Moses. The high priest had

overall charge of Temple finances and administration. His unique privilege was to enter the inner sanctum annually on the Day of Atonement, to burn incense and sprinkle sacrificial animal blood to expiate his own sins and those of the Jewish people. In the first century the high priest also collected taxes and maintained order. He was appointed by the Roman governor. When Pilate became governor in AD 26 he retained Caiaphas in office.

Caiaphas' long tenure implies that he had a good working relationship with the Romans. Caiaphas' involvement in Jesus' condemnation began soon after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. The chief priests and elders gathered in Caiaphas' palace, plotting to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him (Matthew 26:3-4; John 11:45-53). Caiaphas said that it was expedient that one man should die for the people, rather than that the whole nation should perish. After arrest Jesus was taken to Caiaphas' residence where the council sought testimony upon which to kill Him. Two witnesses accused Him of saying He was able to destroy the temple of God and to re-build it in 3 days. Jesus remained silent. Caiaphas then asked Him if He was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus replied: "you have said so...". He then added: "hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." At this, Caiaphas said Jesus had uttered blasphemy and asked the council for judgment. They answered: "He deserves death". Jesus was later bound and led to Pilate (Matthew 26:57-27:2; Mark 14:53-15:2).

Caiaphas would have known that the Romans were not interested in blasphemy against "the Jewish God". The Romans' acute concern was possible