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Cross-Bearing Man Captures Attention of Virgin Islanders on Holy Thursday

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Man seen carrying cross throughout St. Thomas on holy Thursday.

Who is he, and what is he doing?

The latter question was somewhat answered just from the images that surfaced - a man dressed in slippers and a loose white garment lugging a large cross through the streets of St. Thomas on Maundy (Holy) Thursday, April 6, ahead of the Good Friday public holiday that signifies the beginning of the Easter cycle.

The spectacle garnered attention and intense interest from Virgin Islanders, who took to social media sharing photographs and commentary about the yet-to-be-identified man. Some gave the situation a humorous slant. "They say we all have our cross to bear," quipped the Big Bad

Morning Show, in a caption accompanying a photo of the individual taken from someone's car. "At least he can put his down," they continued.

"He's using the CROSS walk," joked another commenter in the Facebook Group "What's going on St. Thomas?"

Others were struck by the religious symbolism of the man's display. "He just wanted to remind people [of] the true meaning of Good Friday," someone averred, noting that many people now focus on secular recreational activities during the week that is among the most holy of religious holidays for people of the Catholic faith and other Christian denominations.

Others discussed the phenotype of a historical Jesus, noting that he likely would not look like the seemingly Caucasian man re-enacting the story of the Savior's walk to his execution by the Romans. Others decided that his message and symbolism outweighed any consideration of his racial background.

Many noted that the unknown man covered a lot of ground during his trek across St. Thomas. People spotted him near the Lindbergh Bay, and walking up Raphune Hill. He was also seen in Red Hook, and in Subbase, among other locations.

More than one person claimed that this individual also enjoys participating in Carnival celebrations, wearing the robes but not his cross accessory. A photo began to circulate of a bearded man thusly dressed, standing behind a music truck. Commenters on those threads subsequently dubbed him #JouvertJesus.

Others noted that someone had done the same thing decades ago – walking through the territory carrying a cross – sometime in the 1990s. As that individual accomplished back then, the man who was spotted on Thursday accomplished one major thing: focusing the attention of the entire territory, at least for the day.