

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

Passion Sunday and Good Friday recall the events of the Lord's greatest suffering – and as such, His greatest *Love*. Jesus is arrested and goes through trial after trial. He is condemned to death by the very people He has come to save. He is scourged, and as His Flesh is torn away, we can see Satan's hand trying to strip Jesus of His humanity. He is crowned with thorns: the King of kings being mocked as a false king and a fool. He is rejected and made to carry His cross to His execution, with the help of an unwilling Simon of Cyrene.

He is stripped naked – stripped of all His dignity – and nailed to a guish in pain, as suffocates to death. His agony here is also that of existential loneliness – rejected, abandoned, denied, betrayed, by all the ones He loves, and even some who love Him. In a moment of desperation, He even feels abandoned by His *Abba* – His Father – as He cries out, “**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**” (Mark 15:34). Despite all of this, He cries out for the forgiveness of those killing and mocking Him (“**Father, forgive them, they know not what they do**” Luke 23:34).

In the midst of this, we see that He is *not* alone. There are some who have dared to console Him. Dismas, the “good thief,” defends Him, and recognizes His Kingship (“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” Luke 23:42), and Jesus responds with words of such reward, “**Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise**” (Luke 23:43).

There are also some women – including Mary, His mother, accompanied by the Beloved Disciple, John – at the foot of the Cross. John was the one who rested on the Heart of Jesus at the Last Supper (John 13:25), and it was because of his great love for the Lord, that he came to be at the Cross. In amidst all of the loneliness and anguish of Jesus, what a blessing that there was someone, in fact “someones” who would dare to be with Jesus in His loneliest hour! And we, too, have the opportunity to be present. Each of us is the “beloved disciple,” each of us has the opportunity to console our Lord in His agony and death. To the words of the old song, “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” we can reply with an overwhelming, “Yes! Yes, I was there!” In every Mass, we are present there; every time we go to Adoration, the sacrifice of Calvary is present; every time we choose to spend time consoling the Lord in His suffering, He brings us to the foot of the Cross.

Jesus looks to His mother, and to the beloved disciple (us, too, remember), and He gives His mother to us, and us to her, “**Woman, behold, your son... Behold your mother**” (John 19:26-27). As John took Mary into His home, so we too are called to take her into our homes, our hearts.

Then, in a beautiful moment, we get to hear what has truly motivated Jesus: “**I thirst**” (John 19:28). He is thirsting for love and for souls. This anguish is what has kept Him on the Cross – not the nails, but His love for you and me, *His thirst for our love*. He pines for our love. The greatest pain He endures is not the nails, or the crown of thorns, but the stark indifference of the ones He loves! When He is longing for us, for our love, and all we give is a post-modern, “meh,” we do more damage to the Heart of Jesus than the spear. He longs for you and me. He aches for us. One tiny act of love we offer to Him is a sweet balm to His aching Heart!

With this cry for our love, His love is finally consummated, “**It is finished**” (John 19:30), and He gives Himself over into the Hands of His Father (“**Father, into your hands I commend my spirit**” Luke 23:46). His Heart is pierced, broken for us, and we see the blood and water flow out (John 19:34), the signs of the Eucharist (remember, God's way of being ever present to us), and Baptism (when God makes us His beloved and precious sons and daughters).

This week, may we be mindful of Christ's great love and His thirst for our love – your love. It is what drove Him – as a zealous love – to give EVERYTHING, so that we could be with Him forever.

Join us in this Holy Week, as we celebrate the Triduum (the three Holy Days), remembering His great love. Holy Thursday's Mass is at 7pm, followed by Adoration in the Parish Center. Good Friday has the reading of the Passion, Adoration of the Cross, and receiving Communion at 3:00pm, with the Living Stations at 7pm. Holy Saturday has our Easter Vigil celebration beginning at 7:30pm.