



Christ in Our Neighborhood

Prayer

Almighty, and ever-living God, You have given the human race Jesus Christ our Savior as a model of humility. He fulfilled your will by becoming man and giving His life on the cross. Help us to bear witness to You by following His example of suffering and make us worthy to share in his resurrection. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Commentary

1st Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7

Isaiah, like other prophets, was called on to give the hard truth to God's people. In this passage, we feel for this messenger of God who says, "I gave my back to those who beat me ... My face I did not shield from buffets and spitting."

These words, of course, foreshadow the pain inflicted on Jesus (as we will read in the Gospel this Sunday).

Isaiah, like Jesus, endured these punishments even as he tried desperately to show God's loving desire to bring His people (His exiled spouse) back. Just a few lines prior to this reading, we hear God's cry for His people to return to His covenantal love:

"Where is the bill of divorce with which I dismissed you?" (v1)

It wasn't God who divorced His people. It was Israel who chose to be separated from the Lord. God sent His prophetic servants, and finally His Son, to bring His people home. But, His people could not understand.

Question

Have you ever asked someone to return to God?
How did they respond?

Commentary

2nd Reading: Philippians 2:6-11

In this beautiful reading, we see the descent of the divine Word and the ascent of humanity in Jesus the Christ. In these few words, Paul delivers the mission and purpose of Jesus.

The Descent:

Christ, who is in the form of God, does not equate himself with God, but takes the form of a human, is enslaved and humbled to the point of death on a cross.

The Ascent:

Because of this, God enthrones the Christ (the anointed King) and places Jesus' name above every other name. The humiliated one now receives genuflections and acclamations, "Jesus Christ is Lord!"

This Palm Sunday reminds us that the Christ entered Jerusalem triumphantly to embrace the cross. Paul reminds us that the Christ began His journey to His Passover moment long before He entered the gates of Jerusalem. The Church reminds us that, from the first sin of Adam, the pre-existent Word of God was silently, mysteriously, and deliberately descending from the heavens to be Jesus (meaning, God saves!)

Question

Has this Lenten period helped you to "humble" yourself or descend from your own sense of pride?

**Be a part of the Sacred Triduum.
Consult your parish bulletin or website for the
times related to the following events:**

**Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil,
Easter Sunday**

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Commentary

Gospel: Mark 14:1-15:47

Why do we read the passion account of Jesus on this Sunday when we will read it again on Good Friday?

The passion accounts in Matthew, Mark, and Luke (also known as the synoptic Gospels because of their similarities) are proclaimed in their respective cycles according to our Church calendar. Mark's passion account is proclaimed this year (Cycle B). Luke's account will be proclaimed next year (Cycle C) and Matthew's in (Cycle A) the year following.

The Passion according to John differs greatly from the accounts of the synoptic Gospels. For this reason, John is read each year on Good Friday.

The only marked difference between Mark's account and the accounts of Matthew and Luke is in Chapter 14:51-52. We read that while the other disciples flee during Jesus' arrest, one young man attempts to follow but runs away naked. The interpretations of this account have varied, but Fr. Raymond Brown suggests that we should read into this an earlier line from Peter (in chapter 10), "We have left all things and have followed you." Instead of following the Lord, Fr. Brown writes, "This young man has literally left all things to flee from Jesus." Father Brown adds that nakedness was a sign of disgrace and that abandoning Jesus in this way added to the disgrace of the Lord's passion. (The Death of the Messiah, R. Brown, pg. 303).

Question

Knowing that you would have been arrested and suffered the same fate as Jesus, would you have followed or fled from the arresting guards?

This Week's Task

Make an attempt to participate in the Triduum (three great days). Join us on Holy Thursday for the Lord's Supper, Good Friday for the Stations and/or the Lord's Passion and the Easter Vigil or Easter morning.

Prayer

The leader invites each member to pass around a crucifix. Holding the cross, they offer a prayer of gratitude for the Lord's passion and death. Then, each will say the following:

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!

The group will respond each time:

*Because by your holy cross,
you have redeemed the world.*

The leader will then guide the group in praying Psalm 22.

Psalm

Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

All who see me, scoff at me;
they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:
"He relied on the Lord;
let him deliver him,
let him rescue him, if he loves him.

Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Indeed, many dogs surround me,
a pack of evildoers closes in upon me;
they have pierced my hands and my feet;
I can count all my bones.

Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

They divide my garments among them,
and for my vesture they cast lots.
But you, O Lord, be not far from me;
O my help, hasten to aid me.

Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

I will proclaim your name to my brethren;
in the midst of the assembly I will praise you:
"You who fear the Lord, praise him;
all you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him;
revere him, all you descendants of Israel!"

Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Conclude with an OUR FATHER.