

## Homily Notes and Reflections for Good Friday, April 10, 2020

Readings: Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 31; Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42

### 1. Readings:

2. **The Isaiah reading** is the fourth of the "Servant of Yahweh" songs of the suffering servant. This is the most explicit prophecy of the sufferings of Jesus.

3. **Psalm 31:** Responsorial Psalm is the Psalm from which Jesus quoted while on the Cross, showing his confidence in God.

4. **Hebrews:** This reminds us of how Jesus understands us and feels with us while at the same time being our Savior.

5. **The reading from John recalls the entire Passion of Jesus.**

6. **Good Friday: A day to remember the immense suffering and sacrifice of Jesus, the God/Man and a challenge to carry our own crosses.**

A. **The cross and the crucifix are meaningful symbols**, just as the dove symbolizes peace and the heart symbolizes love.

1. **The crucifix and the cross are the symbols of a loving and sacrificial offering of self for others.** It is only in the cross that we see the face of God. We look at the sun and see the energy of God. We look at the stars and see the infinity of God. We look at the atom and see the complexity of God. But it is only in the cross that we see the face of God's love. It is only in the cross that we see a love so great that God was willing to die for us. It is only in the cross that we hear the statement, "*No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends*" (John 15: 13), and the cross states all this.

2. **The cross is the symbol of the remission of our sins:** The Bible says that when Jesus died, he took all our sin to himself on the cross, and so he conquered sin and the devil's power forever. Whenever we see the cross, we should realize that he was bruised, crushed and died for our iniquities. Is 53:5, "*But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed.*"

3. **The cross is the symbol of humble self-emptying for others.**

It is the symbol of the cross-bearing Christ leading us in our life's journey of pain and suffering, carrying his heavier cross and still encouraging us, strengthening us and supporting us.

4) **The cross is the symbol of the risen Christ** who promises us a crown of glory as a reward of our patient bearing of our daily crosses.

B **The cross involves pain – permitted to us by God for His purposes, received and endured cheerfully and offered to Him with love.**

1) The true cross is the pain we endure without complaint, offering it to Jesus for others, and joining it to His sufferings.

2) It can be the sanctifying pain involved in sharing our blessings sacrificially with others, bearing with their shortcomings as they bear with ours, and offering them loving service.

- 3) It can be the pain involved in controlling our evil tendencies and dying to our self-centering self-worship, so that we can love God and our neighbors better.
- 4) It is the pain involved in standing with Jesus and gladly following him, even if that means scorn and humiliation from the rest of the world.

### **C. Sources of our crosses**

- 1) Crosses given by Nature, *e.g.*, diseases, natural disasters, death.
- 2) Crosses involved in doing our duties faithfully.
- 3) Crosses given by the others.
- 4) Crosses we create for ourselves.

**D. Why we should carry our crosses?** We should carry our crosses to benefit fully from the gracious gift of reconciliation that Jesus has won for us, reconciliation with God, with God's Church and with God's people. We are asked to look at the cross and to see that it not remain outside of us, but that we identify with Christ and particularly with Christ crucified. Every time we sign ourselves with the cross in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we renew within our hearts the realization that the cross, and Christ's love for us that it represents, is not something apart from us, outside of us and distinct from us.

### **E. How we should not carry our crosses?**

- 1) Cursing one's fate as does the donkey carrying its load.
- 2) Protesting as do the bulls or horses pulling their carts.
- 3) Working only for remuneration or wage as does the hired worker.

### **F. How should we carry our crosses?**

- 1) Like a loving wife who nurses her paralyzed husband or sick child with sacrificial love and dedicated commitment.
- 2) Comparing our light crosses with the heavy crosses of terminally ill patients, patients in emergency wards etc.
- 3) By drawing strength and inspiration from Jesus walking ahead of us carrying his heavier cross and supporting us in carrying our crosses.
- 4) By being aware that we may need to suffer more now because of previous problems.

### **G. Practical applications:**

# 1: We need to lay the foundation of daily life on Christ's cross. Every morning we can make a short profession of faith in the power of Christ's cross, ask the Lord to position us on the ground of his cross and to plant his cross in our life that day. At night we can make an examination of conscience by first reviewing how much or how little we stayed upon the foundation of Christ's cross. Critical is being willing to risk and suffer on behalf of others, especially when dealing with issues in our families or in our Church community.

# 2: We need to heal our inner wounds through the cross of Christ. An area where it is very important for us to apply the cross of Christ in our life is that of healing from wounds to our character that we sustained early in life, especially in the first seven years of our life. The good news is that the cross of Christ can heal and undo even these early wounds. Let us especially pray for those who have been abused earlier in their lives, including ourselves.