

Good Friday

The Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, which we commemorate today, reveals to us the power of suffering redeemed through the love of God. Suffering and sin, in themselves, are absurd. Without faith in God people are enslaved by them to anxiety and fear or resort to idolatry as these seek to "buy off" the invisible



powers or fate which seem to govern our lives. Another option is to distract ourselves from the emptiness and pain through retail therapy, abuse of substances or incessant travel and entertainment. Through faith we can know the power of God's mercy and love which would otherwise be beyond us when we are blinded by selfishness and despair. This applies to all human beings regardless and is available across all ethnic and social divisions. St Paul says: "For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood effective through faith." (Rm 3: 22-25) This gift needed to be given purely out of love because we had nothing to offer God in return: "But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." (Rm 5: 8)

This begs the question: "How can I avail myself, in a society oppressed by fear of the corona virus and economic hardship, of this amazing love?" As we have just seen St Paul tells us that this grace is made effective through faith. This faith, brought about through love, transforms our lives. "For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all, so that those who live might love no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them." (2 Cor 5: 14-15) It is important to realize that this faith does not make of us mere spectators of God's work and suffering but makes us participants in it and therefore of its saving power: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I live I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2: 19-20) and "The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." (Rm 6: 10-11) This means that we cannot be passive, rather, we must all strive to make the lessons of Christ's Passion a reality in our everyday conduct. This is so our faith can become a vital and enlivening principle that guides us in all. We remain as disciples, not yet masters, since we are yet to attain the glory of the resurrection that is promised to us: "No that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but

this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil 3: 12-14)

The result of all this is that our own activity takes on a new significance. the way we speak, the way we use money, the way we love. The passion of Christ is made present in our own response to our own suffering and that of others. Our conduct becomes a signpost to the efficacy of faith and the wonderful love of the pioneer of our salvation who is Christ Jesus. Thus, we are made heralds for Christ and invite others to journey with us "in this vale of tears." We accompany one another on this pilgrimage of life not oppressed by fear but with a song of joy in our hearts and on our lips: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in this way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, who has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." (2 Cor 5: 16-20)