

Our Lady of the Airways Parish

Good Friday - The Lord's Passion, 2020



Dear Friends in Christ,

"We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you...because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world".

When Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, *"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"* His disciples responded by recounting the various opinions held by the common people of the time: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets (cf. Mt: 16:13-14). Ever since that day, continuing with our modern times, many have held varying mistaken ideas concerning Jesus Christ. Atheists deny his existence. Rationalists view him as a philosopher of good intentions. New Age adherents equate him with Buddha, or other noble figures.

As Christians, we profess faith in Jesus Christ with the words of Simon Peter: *"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."* We acknowledge Jesus as Messiah, because he was anointed to carry out the Father's mission of life, love and salvation. Jesus alluded to this mission when he said, *"The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor"* (Lk 14:18-19).

Although this mission is seen throughout our Lord's teachings and within his Galilean ministry, nevertheless, it finds its ultimate manifestation and culmination in the mysteries of his suffering, passion and death on Calvary. St. Augustine remarked, *"As they were looking on, so we too gaze on his wounds as he hangs. We see his blood as he dies. We see the price offered by the Redeemer.... He bows his head, as if to kiss you. His heart is made bare open, as it were, in love to you. His arms are extended that he may embrace you. His whole body is displayed for your redemption. Ponder how great these things are...as he was once fixed to the Cross in every part of his body for you, so he may now be fixed in every part of your soul."* It is rather appropriate that within every Good Friday liturgy, as the priest slowly unveils the cross, he recites the words, *"Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the Saviour of the world."* For it is by means of the Cross that Christ mightily won our salvation, by dying for our sins, and thereby conquering death and destroying the power of sin forever.

Although the Cross is principally intended as a means of our salvation, it is also an 'academy of love.' It is a school where we can learn to model and fashion our lives, because the Cross exemplifies every virtue. St. Aquinas preached: *"If you seek the example of **love**...such a man was Christ on the cross.... If you seek **patience**...look upon Jesus, who bore his cross and despised the shame.... If you seek an example of **humility**, look upon the crucified one, for God who wished to be judged by Pontius Pilate and to die.... If you seek an example of **obedience**, follow him who became obedient to the Father even unto death.... If you seek an example of **despising earthly things**...upon the cross he was stripped, mocked, spat upon, struck, crowned with thorns...."*

We are all facing painful and unexpected difficulties during this Covid-19 Pandemic: sickness, bad will, criticisms, friction and tension, good intentions misunderstood, family quarrels, separations, sorrowful bereavements, restrictions on movement, reversal of fortunes...just to name a few. We can be tempted to see these things in a negative light, as sources of frustration, anger, resentment, and even occasions of sin, resulting in a disturbance within our spiritual lives. However, if we view them in a positive light - as "little crosses" that we can unite with the Cross of Jesus Christ - they will help us to grow in virtue and holiness.

I invite you this Good Friday to reflect upon the mysteries of his suffering, passion and death and be formed in the school of virtue. Spend some time before the Crucified Lord and thank Him for being our Saviour!

Pax Christi,

Fr. Thomas Lim