

## HOMILY FOR GOOD FRIDAY

Theme: "Looking at yourself in the mirror."

Our liturgy on Good Friday presents us with a very graphic narrative of the passion and death of Jesus. The readings of the Passion describe the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. Anytime I read the account of the passion and death of Jesus, my mind goes back to "The Passion of the Christ," a movie directed by Mel Gibson. I went with some parishioners when it was first released. When the movie was over, I heard some folks comment, "This is just a movie; it can't be true that Jesus endured such a cruel death." Hmmm. Lord, have mercy! If you can envision/imagine the passion accounts of the Gospel writers, one would not doubt their Passion narratives as a true account of what Jesus went through.

We show great reverence for the crucifix, the sign of our redemption, as we pray during the Stations of the Cross: "We Adore You, O Christ, and We Bless You, Because by Your Cross You Have Redeemed the World." The crucifix always reminds us of Jesus' self-giving and his unconditional love for us.

The first reading, taken from the Fourth Song of the Servant of Yahweh, tells what a true servant of God went through for sins he never committed, an innocent victim. The early Christian community applied this description to Jesus Christ. His suffering was innocent; he had done no wrong. It was vicarious, that is, the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all, which brought redemption to us. In the second reading, we hear of the high priest who Christians applied to Jesus, who identified with us sinners even though he was sinless. Jesus was able to sympathize with us in weakness, tempted as we are, yet he never sinned. Through God's mercy we're saved by Jesus' passion and death.

Meditating and reflecting on the Passion account of Jesus reminds me of the expression: "Looking at yourself in the mirror." When you look into the mirror, you see yourself, right? This expression simply means to reflect on yourself. So I asked myself, and perhaps you may also pose these same or similar questions to yourself, can I/you identify with any of the characters in the Passion narrative?

Am I/are you Caiaphas, who was thinking only about religious orthodoxy? Or you are Pilate, who knew Jesus' innocence but was interested only in his high office and the preservation of law and order?

Or Judas, the betrayer, who was disappointed that Jesus was not political messiah who would win over their enemies, the Romans, and restore the kingdom to Israel? He later admitted his malice and could not forgive himself, hence, took his own life. Beloved, there is NO sin you commit that God will not freely forgive if you repent and ask for forgiveness. He is a forgiving and merciful God.

Peter, who denied Jesus three times and regretted/repented, and accepted Jesus' forgiveness? Peter went on to become the first successor/Pope of Christ. He loved Jesus so much that he died for Jesus and His holy Roman Catholic Church.

Or the crowd who were moved with false emotions and called for the death sentence on Jesus? Remember, a couple of days ago, they were praising him: "Hosanna to the Son of David." Jesus might have fed, healed, or taught them.

Soldiers who felt they're only carrying out orders?

Or his beloved mom?

Let us pray for Jesus' forgiveness and mercy. Let us ask Him to help us to be his faithful disciples.

God bless.