

Good Friday: Readings: Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Hebrew 4:14-16;5:7-9 & John 18:1-19:42

Theme: "JESUS SAID, I THIRST"

The celebration of Good Friday recalls Jesus' crucifixion and death on the Cross. It reminds us of Jesus Christ's supreme and unconditional love for us. It is a day of prayer, fasting, and penance. It is also a day to examine our life to see if we are faithful to our baptismal promises to Jesus. Today's celebration is not just a historical event, rather, Christ's sacrificial death on the Cross and his glorious resurrection.

The Liturgy has three main parts: the Liturgy of the Word and General intercessions, Veneration of the Cross, and the Reception of Holy Communion.

All three readings are meant to help us to understand and appreciate the Liturgy of Good Friday.

The first reading, taken from the Fourth Servant Song of Isaiah, presents us with a preview of Jesus' mission and destiny. In today's first reading, like the first reading of the Palm Sunday, describes the Servant of God as a man of suffering who was unjustly put to death. He was truly an innocent victim. The Church applied this first reading to Jesus Christ who accepted his passion and death because of his unconditional love he has for us.

The author of the letter to the Hebrews reminds us also in the second reading of the passion and death of Jesus. Jesus, the High Priest, identified himself with us sinners. Even though he is without sin, he is able to sympathize with our weakness/sin. This explains why we sinners can confidently approach him for mercy, forgiveness, and love.

In the Gospel of St. John, we hear of his graphic presentation of the passion and death account of Jesus. John presents Jesus as both Priest and Sacrificial Lamb.

Meditating on his passion and death during the reading of the Gospel, among the texts that inspired me the most is: "JESUS SAID, I THIRST."

I remember that it is this same text that inspired Mother Teresa of Calcutta (now St. Teresa of Calcutta) to find Missionaries of Charity she started in India to serve the poorest of the poor. Now, these missionaries are found throughout the world. She found Jesus' thirsting in the poorest of the poor he called her to serve. She did it so faithfully until her death. May she continue to pray for us to see Jesus in our community and serve them also faithfully!

While Jesus was going through untold sufferings on the cross, he cried: "I THIRST." While his cry of thirst for water might be understood as physical thirst, which is normal, common suffering during crucifixion, Jesus thirsts rather for love, for love of us. As Scripture tells us, he loves us to death.

Looking in our world today, I do believe Jesus continues to say to us, "I THIRST." We can see Jesus' thirsting in our society in the poor, the elderly, those with disabilities etc. Jesus continues to cry "I thirst" in the marginalized. Are you willing and ready to help quench their thirst?

By loving these marginalized people, we are quenching Jesus' thirst. Again, Mother Teresa of Calcutta heard Jesus' cry for thirsting and responded faithfully by founding the Missionaries of Charity who are serving the poorest of the poor throughout the world.

Let us also turn to Holy Mother Mary and her beloved husband, St. Joseph, and St. Teresa of Calcutta to pray for us to satisfy Jesus' thirst by loving one another, especially the poor and needy in our community.