

## GOOD FRIDAY HOMILY 02

“From Suffering Servant to Loving Servants”

(Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 30 (31); Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42)

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What do you think the world will look like 2,000 years from now? How close do you think your prediction would be to the reality?

In the first reading for today’s Good Friday celebration the prophet Isaiah prophecies, amazingly and accurately, what would happen to Jesus as suffering servant centuries before the fact. The reading of the Passion is a celebration and confirmation of that prophecy. In the unfolding of the Passion story, we see and hear what Isaiah had envisioned.

These readings and this whole celebration impart to us a clear message – we are invited to follow Jesus by expressing our faith in God’s love for us through humble, loving service.

In the second reading, St. Paul identifies Jesus as a High Priest, as the Son of God who has gone before us into heaven. Yet as the Suffering Servant, he remains one of us, tempted in every way that we are, but without sin. And because of that amazing faith and love, he has become for us the source of salvation

There is more. St. Paul also invites us to a course of action. He asks us to believe in Jesus (to obey him and hold fast to our confession) and to pray (to approach the throne of grace with boldness).

The papal preacher Fr. CantaleMESSA offers an interesting observation here. He invites us to ask ourselves about this fact: Why were the women untroubled by the scandal of the cross? Why did they stay when everything seem finished, and when even his closest disciples had abandoned him and simply went back home?

Jesus had already given the answer to this question. In Luke 7:47, when replying to Simon, he said of the woman who had washed and kissed his feet: “She has loved much.” The women had followed Jesus for himself, out of gratitude for the good they had received from him, not for the hope of getting some benefit from him or having a career from following him. Their love for Jesus was more pure and selfless. “Twelve thrones,” which the disciples wanted, were not promised to them, nor had they asked to sit at his right hand in his kingdom. They followed him, it is written in Luke 8:3 and Matthew 27:55, “to serve him.” They were the only ones, after Mary his mother, to have truly assimilated, at that point, the spirit of the Gospel.

They followed the reasoning of the heart and this had not deceived them. In this way their presence near the crucified and risen Christ contains a vital teaching for today. Our civilization, dominated by science, reason and technology, needs a heart to survive

without being dehumanized. We have to give more room to the “reasons of the heart,” if humanity is not to fall into a cold, harsh ice age.

Someone who truly lived this dimension of the cross was Mother Theresa of Calcutta. A frail, humble nun in India who picked up the dying to give them dignity, she cared nothing for the riches and honours of the world, though she was given the Nobel Peace prize some years ago. She turned most gifts given to her into raffle prizes to help the poor. She had a special concern for the unborn, the unwanted children, and the dying poor. Kings and princes respected her and bowed in her presence, yet she owned nothing. Truly, she was living the mystery of the cross with peace and joy in her heart, and attracted hundreds of followers.

As we continue to celebrate today, let us pray that we may have a stronger and stronger faith in the power and depth of God’s transformative love for us. Let us be confident, approach the throne of grace, and pray that we may respond to that love by learning to truly love each other from the heart, through loving relationships and humble service.