

Good Friday

Good Friday
March 30, 2018
Fr. Max Oliva, S.J.

GOOD FRIDAY

This is a night of incredible pain, mercy, and love.

Let us begin with two perspectives:

“He (Jesus) was spurned, a man of suffering. Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured; he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins By his stripes we were healed. Through his sufferings we are made whole.” -- (Isaiah 52)

“It was early Friday morning when I saw my son. That was the first glimpse I had of him since they took him away. His bruised and bleeding skin sent a sword of pain deep into my heart and tears down my cheeks.” -- From “Praying the Stations with Mary, the Mother of Jesus,” By Richard Furey (Twenty Third Publications, 2003)

It was a dark time, a dark night.

To get a glimpse of Jesus’ pain, think of a dark time in your own life:

Death of someone close to you
An experience of being betrayed
An unwanted divorce
Loss of a job
Facing a bully at school
A serious negative medical diagnosis
Whatever it might be for you.....

I was eighteen years old when my mother – my best friend – found out that she had cancer. That was a dark moment for her, my dad, my four siblings and myself. Mom was 44. After two years of suffering, she died. My sisters were thirteen, eleven, and five, my brother three when she went to God.

But sorrow and pain are not the end of the story. St. Paul tells us in his Letter to the Galatians (6:14) that we should “glory in the cross of

our Lord Jesus Christ.” Why? Because:

Jesus show us the way to deal with our own crosses.
The way to the Resurrection is through the Cross.
My mother died on Easter Sunday morning.

St. Theodore of Stoudites put it this way: “How splendid the Cross of Christ!

It brings life, not death; light and paradise. It is the wood on which the Lord, like a great warrior, was wounded in hands and feet and side, but healed thereby our wounds.”

In a few minutes we will have the opportunity to adore the Cross here in the Church. Three times we will hear the words: “Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the salvation of the world. To what can we compare this dying to rising?

A grain of wheat hidden in the earth
The sun before its rising
A shiny pearl nesting in its oyster-home
A baby in it’s mother’s womb
Jesus on the cross and then the empty tomb

The blood of the Lamb saves us and protects us.
Our hope keeps watch in the night.
Our faith is refined, our trust in the possibility of new life tested and strengthened.

And so, let us glory in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Reflections on the Cross of San Damiano
---Patrick McNamara, OFM, Cap.

I look to the Cross, I gaze upon its figure,
I wait, I listen, I hope.
Will you speak, will you move, will I be moved.

Will you once again touch the heart of one who seeks.

Of one who questions, of one who seems so lost.

Will you embrace the soul, as you did that of Francis.

Will you take it to Yourself?

Will you give it peace, give it comfort, give it love.

This soul waits, listens, prays for such grace.

This soul seeks the Love from the Lover.

It wavers. It stumbles. It falls.

Your gaze looks down, embraces all.

Takes all, Loves All. Your grace heals, accepts.

Again you respond. Again you Love. Again you speak to a searching
and troubled heart.

I turn. I continue the journey. I continue in Hope.

I too have heard you Speak.”

Father Max Oliva, S.J.