

Good Friday Homily – B

The Church around the world today commemorates the suffering, crucifixion, and death of our Lord. He did this to show us the depth of his love. If you think of it, God the Father could have just forgiven our sins, without his Son dying for us. That would have been the merciful thing to do, to just simply forgive us, no questions asked. But instead, God sent his Son, incarnate as a man, to redeem us, and by doing so, he left us much more than we had lost through Original Sin – our Lord left us the Church, the visible presence of his Kingdom on earth, and he left us the Sacraments, where we personally encounter him through tangible signs. But he also had to suffer and die because we had to see his great love for us, and the effect our sins have on God.

On the 5th Sunday of Lent, we heard about God's law written on our hearts. God's law is not just some arbitrary regulations that have no effect if we keep or break them. God's laws are not like the rules of the road – if nobody sees you, then does a stop sign really mean stop? If everyone is doing 90 in an 80 zone, then the right thing to do is 90 as well. I wonder if we sometimes think of God's laws like that – How many times do we sin, and we know what we've done is a sin because the Church *tells* us it's a sin, but we don't *feel* like what we've done is a bad thing? We tend to think that God won't punish me for a little lie, or a little laziness, or a little stealing... But God's laws don't work like that. God's laws are written on our hearts; we are in a relationship with God, and when we sin, we injure ourselves and God. We break our relationship with God when we sin. We break God's heart when we sin.

What does this mean to us as human beings who offend the Divine God? How can we *comprehend* the evil that sin is, the damage that it causes? How can we *understand* that we offend God by our sins? God didn't want to leave our understanding of sin as something abstract, but to understand that they have real consequences and really do offend God. This is why Christ had to suffer for us – we needed to see the effect that our sins have; we needed to witness the pain that they cause God. We needed to see God, who is infinite beauty, to being reduced to having no majesty, nothing desirous in his appearance. We needed to see him wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; we had to see him bear the punishment for us all. We had to see the perversion of justice that led him to the Cross; we had to see his chosen people whom he released from slavery, led to the Promised Land, granted success in all their endeavors... we have to see ourselves in them as they shouted “We have no king but the

emperor! Crucify him!” We had to see him bear his suffering in silence for us. We had to see him bear everything that we deserved. We had to see the soldier pierce the side of Christ; literally break the heart of God because of our sins.

This is the extent of Christ’s love for us. Love brings people together; it was love that caused our Lord to go to the Cross. He has borne all our suffering, weakness, and sins; he knows what each one of us goes through in our temptation and struggles; Let us seek the Lord in our times of struggle, and unite our pain and suffering to his, as he has united himself to our fallen nature. As we read in the letter to the Hebrews, “Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”