

April 22, 2011

GOOD FRIDAY (A)

What is the most important event, the greatest victory ever won in the history of the world?

It is the victory that has set us free from sin and the bondage of death!

It is the victory that has vanquished all the forces of evil in the world!

It is the victory that has established the reign of justice, love and peace in the world,
for all who believe and accept it!

It is the victory that has brought us new life in the Spirit leading to eternal life!

It is the victory that has made us sons and daughters of God, brothers and sisters in Christ!

It is the victory that makes us all one together in God!

It is the victory of the Crucifixion and Death of Jesus for our own Resurrection!

And so the Church sings:

“Jesus, through your Cross and Resurrection, you have brought joy to the world!
Saving Lord, you are joy for all ages!

We glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, who saves us and sets us free!
Through him we find salvation, life and resurrection!”

1. Sacramental Presence of Christ's Death

Today we are able to be spiritually present at the saving, victorious Death of Christ,
through the Liturgy of the Church.

Today's Liturgy makes us able to be sacramentally present at this most momentous event
in the history of the world, an event that will endure for all time.

In today's Liturgy, Christ is present with us in the saving power of his Death!

2. The Meaning of Salvation

Christ died for the salvation of the world. What does this mean?

It means that Christ by his Death and Resurrection has vanquished sin and death and begun a
new creation, opening the way to live eternally with God and all the blessed.

We are created anew by our Baptism which has come to us through the Death and Resurrection
of Christ.

Christ's new creation includes the whole universe, all people and the earth that God has
given us.

All of us and the earth itself are to be renewed through him and restored to God.

Through his Death and Resurrection, Christ has established his Kingdom.

Jesus calls us as members of his Kingdom, his Church, to work together for justice,
love and peace. He carries on his new creation through us.

He calls us to work for social justice for all people and for social charity uniting all people.

Social justice means that we are called to work with others to change the sinful structures
and systems that go against the wellbeing of others, especially the poor and neglected.

Social charity, social love, means that we are called to work with others to promote a spirit
of respect, good will and care for all groups and in all groups.

Only through social justice and social love will unity and peace come to the world.

3. Does Jesus Love Me?

1) We believe God loves everyone, but when it comes to ourselves, do we doubt?

Can Jesus really love me, did he really die for me? I am not worthy of his love.

2) Jesus is saying: “Come to me, I have covered your sin. It is wiped out by my blood.

Do not let my Death for you be in vain. It is precisely because of your unworthiness, your
sinfulness that I have died for you, to free you, to lift you up, to make you worthy.”

- 3) The Blood of Jesus overcomes our self-centredness, our seeking for ourselves, our shame, our distrust, and our doubt that we can be loved by Jesus and others.
- 4) His Blood overcomes the hatred, oppression, lust, greed, injustice and cruelty of the world.
- 5) When we go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we hear Jesus' personal words of forgiveness.
He gives us his Spirit to heal whatever our sins have done to us.
He gives us his light, power and love to live in him and have him live in us.

4. Mary's Role in Our Salvation

- 1) In today's Passion Reading, we hear how Mary stood at the foot of the Cross. She suffered with Jesus for our salvation. As she bears his suffering with him, Mary pleads that it may come to an end. Mary also pleads for the forgiveness and salvation of the two criminals hanging on the cross. One of them profits by her intercession and gets to heaven. Mary is the Refuge of Sinners.
- 2) By becoming the Mother of Jesus, Mary became the Mother of all of us. She has given us new life in Jesus, the life of the Spirit.
As she stood at the foot of the Cross, Jesus made explicit that Mary is the Mother of all of us. John the apostle standing with Mary, represented all of us. Jesus said to Mary: "Woman, here is your son." To John he said: "Here is your mother." By addressing Mary as "Woman", Jesus is speaking to her as the new Eve who brings forth the children of God.
- 3) Mary is our Intercessor in all our needs and distress. "Never was it known that anyone who sought her intercession was left unaided."

4. The Veneration of the Cross

- 1) In the time of Jesus, the Cross was a sign of infamy, the sign of execution of the worst criminals and traitors.
- 2) Now the Cross symbolizes our faith in the saving Death of Christ.
- 3) It is the most honoured symbol wherever Christians gather.
It is no longer a sign of shame and guilt, but a sign of our greatest hope, our greatest glory.
"We glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"
- 4) As we look upon the Cross, we see the love of God for us, and our deliverance.
- 5) Now as we honour and venerate the Cross, may we pledge ourselves to Jesus to carry on his saving work, to bring his love, and justice, and peace to all the people in our lives.

(It is suggested that if the celebrant holds up the Cross for all the people to venerate, that they be asked to join hands, even across the aisle, and to offer a prayer for each other, explaining that Christ died to unite all the people of the world.)

5. Holy Communion

- 1) In Communion we receive the fruit of Jesus' saving Death. Jesus continues to come to us, reaching out over the ages to embrace us.
- 2) When Jesus comes to us in Communion, we receive Him, but we also receive all our fellow members who are in Him, joined with Him.
I cannot accept Jesus in Communion without accepting all my fellow members.
- 3) Jesus comes to us to make us all one in him, the goal of his Death on the Cross.
He prayed before his Death: "may they all be one, Father, as you in me, and I in you, may they be one in us."
- 4) As we receive Jesus, may we express our love and gratitude to him, and respond to his sacrifice for us by asking him to live in us, and to lead us to love and serve one another.