

Good Friday Homily
This Friday is Good
4/22/2011

Prayer of Praise

Our Father in Heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your Kingdom has come being established through the cross of Jesus Christ, wherein He despoiled Your enemies, making a show of them openly in it. And by that same cross, our sins have been nailed to it with Him such that we have died to sin and ever live to Christ. We mark this day of death but only as the means of eternal life. We praise and magnify the name of our Lord Jesus, and preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. Glory to God in the highest. Amen.

Let us Confess Together.

Corporate Confession. Silent Confession.
 Rise up, O Saints of God, for you are forgiven through the cross of Christ.

Assurance of Pardon

Today, we celebrate the dark day of the death of the Lord Jesus for sins. But we also understand that He has triumphed over death and sin and that we are, indeed, forgiven. Amen.

Homily-This Friday is Good

We have come to Friday before Easter, the remembrance of the night of the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus. The long penitential season is drawing to a close, winter has passed, Spring has arrived, and we find ourselves, weak and weary before the Lord.

But, just when we are in our greatest need of relief, we find the greatest barrier. Just when we need to hear that we are forgiven, we are reminded of our complicity with the death of the Lord Jesus. Just when we need to be absolved from our sins, we see them loom menacingly before us in the aspect of a great Roman cross. And our Lord Jesus, who we need to save us, is suffering and dying before us. What are we to do?

We have made it to the day we call Good Friday but there seems to be nothing good in it, except, perhaps, for the fact that it is one day closer to Easter. We want to hurry past this day, past Saturday, and emerge in the

victory of Easter, that really Good day. This Friday does not seem so good after all, so why call it good?

These are all very good questions. We find ourselves wondering what could possibly be good about a horrendous murder. What could be good about the rejection of the Son of man? What could be good about suffering, misunderstanding, rejection, betrayal, desertion, fear, despair? We come to this day to call it good but we find ourselves with grief and shame weighed down.

But the day really is good. Hear what the scriptures say.

2 Cor 5:14-15 14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

Why is this day good? It is good because not only has Jesus died but you have died. It is good because you are dead with Jesus on the cross.

But, we protest, how can it be good that we are dead with our Lord?

Hear the Word of the Lord, again.

Col 2:13-15 13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

This day is good because when Christ died, we died with Him. He died to sin and we died to sin with Him. And that means that sin no longer holds us. All the sins that we were guilty of have also been nailed to the cross with Jesus. The guilty verdict against us was nailed to the cross with Christ.

We tend to look to the cross and continue in our guilt and shame. Our sins, that put him there, rise up against us, too. But that is NOT the story of the cross. Our sins do not rise up against us there. Our sins are there crucified with Christ, our sins are killed and death is killed.

We should admire the work of Jesus. Imagine the superhero stepping in for the less than deserving citizens, undergoing the wrath of his arch-enemy, all for the sake of saving a few unworthy citizens who do not really understand his calling as a superhero. They look on with admiration and thanksgiving because they know that they could not defeat the enemy. They

know that they do not have the power to do so. Even if they died in the trying, the enemy would rage on.

Jesus's work on the cross is like that. He took away the weapons of the enemy. He trampled down their usurped power and proved it on Sunday.

Instead of thinking, what a shame He had to die, we should be thinking, "Thank God one was found willing to sacrifice Himself for His people, for me, one who was an unworthy citizen."

O, blessed Jesus! O, blessed cross! It is good that You have died and saved me. I will serve you all my days!

1 Thess 5:9-11 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. 11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

Comfort yourselves, not just in the fact that Sunday is coming but also in the fact that Jesus died for you. This should be a comfort and not a burden. Perhaps we cannot fully see the comfort in it until Sunday but Sunday is coming. And now, knowing that Jesus rose from the dead, we can see that in the cross, in His death, He paid for our sins. So, while the cross is a solemn place, it should be one of great relief. All our debts are paid for there. All of our sins are covered there. Our forgiveness is made, there at the cross. And this being the case, we look forward to the Resurrection of our Lord and the life that He brings, having taken out the debt of sins and death on the cross.

So, let us comfort ourselves, finding peace in the blessed cross of Christ and this Friday that we call Good.

BENEDICTION

Dear Saints, our Lord Jesus was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. To Him be all praise and honor. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with his stripes we are healed. Go in the peace of Christ. Amen.