



Good Friday Reflection 2019
Schoenstatt Women's Professional League

“This is the greatest, yet most horrible moment in all history. In this one death, all death is forever destroyed. In this seeming defeat is found ultimate victory. In this depth of despair is found the source of all hope.”

(Unknown, *The Living Stations of the Cross*)

The Passion of the Lord is severe. It would stretch any man to the utmost of his limits, and Christ goes far beyond these limits. His beads of blood in place of sweat in the Garden of Gethsemane, His terrible scourging, the inches-long thorns pushed tightly into His skull...all this and so much more He suffered for us.

The Way of the Cross is filled with agony, and yet also with incredible amounts of self-less love. Veronica sees Jesus and pities him, but she cannot help, and she has nothing to give him to ease his suffering – so she gives all that she can, and she wipes His face with her veil to keep the sweat and blood from stinging His eyes and filling His mouth. Joseph of Arimathea, though at first perhaps reluctant to help this Man walk to his death, stays with Christ until the very end, shouldering part of His burden – *our* burden. When the women of Jerusalem weep at the sight of Jesus, he comforts them: “Weep not for me, but for yourselves and your children”. The Good Thief is comforted in his final hours by Christ with His promise of salvation. And finally: Christ gives John His Mother.

The weight of the entirety of humanity’s sins, from creation to the end of the world, are being born by Jesus in these hours, and yet He loves. His selflessness in the sacrifice of His Life is apparent, but how often do we stop and wonder at how Christ fully, selflessly *loved* during his final hours even when at the utmost limits of pain? His Way of the Cross is in every way a physical torment, and also a psychological and emotional trial, as in the devil’s torments in the Garden. Yet in every personal encounter he has – even with Herod, even with Pilate – there is a gentleness that unsettles the wicked and comforts the righteous.

Particularly in Jesus’s treatment of the Good Thief and in his final words to St. John and the Blessed Mother there is something more, a particular kind of love. In His final moments on earth, when our salvation is all but accomplished, Christ ensures that the Good Thief will die peacefully knowing that soon he will be safe, at home in the Heavenly Kingdom. To John, His most beloved Apostle, Christ bestows a Mother and her loving heart to take into his home and care for. By entrusting Mary to John, Christ also ensures that His Mother – who had

selflessly said yes to God's call and to a life of suffering time and time again; who had raised Him, worried for Him, and stayed with Him even in the worst of all possible situations; and who was surely traumatized by the suffering, torment, and crucifixion of her Son – He ensures that she will have a home and will be loved in this life. In this action, Jesus also ensured for us that we would always have a Mother, and that we could always find a home in her heart.

The ultimate act of love, Christ's Death to ensure our salvation, is such an immense act of the will and so deeply connected with the nature of God as Love itself that it is impossible to grasp, and often difficult to imagine. God's love for us is truly immeasurable and has never been more clearly shown than in the Way of the Cross and the Crucifixion of Christ. For reflection, please ponder the hours from the Agony in the Garden to the Crucifixion and Jesus's death as moments of selfless love done specifically for you and consider the hope and joy that such a deep love should inspire in your life for the Holy Trinity.

Further Reflection:

- **Contemplate the Way of the Cross as a series of moments when Christ gently encounters and loves others throughout the details of the Scripture accounts.**
- **Who are the people in my life that I struggle to love? E.g., a coworker, a roommate, a rival...**
- **What are some practical ways that I can love others or make them feel loved and valued? How can I do this specifically as an apostolic endeavor?**
- **The concept of having a home or being at home has many meanings and iterations, but they all center around a feeling of being loved, being safe, and being with those we trust. How can I develop my relationship with Christ and the Blessed Mother so that when I pray I feel at home? Is my heart shrine my home in the world?**
- **Practice finding the Safe Harbor of Mary's Heart in your heart shrine throughout the days of the Octave of Easter (Easter till Divine Mercy Sunday).**