



**Blessed Sacrament Parish**  
**Homily by Father Adam Prichard**  
**April 14, 2017 Good Friday of the Lord's Passion**

**Reading I** Isaiah 52:13 thru 53:12

**Psalm** 31:2, 6, 12-17. 25

**Reading II** Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

**Gospel** John 18:1 thru 19:42

**Homily**

After the homily we will have the veneration of the cross and one of the things we will say is: "Behold, the Wood of the Cross, on which hung our salvation." We look at the cross and it was the standard capital punishment for the non-Romans. It was too punitive to the Romans to be crucified, and so most Roman citizens were not crucified. We think to ourselves, "Why do we use the cross as a symbol of our faith? What is so important about the cross?"

One of the things that Jesus knew was that crucifixion was humiliation. It was an event of failure, of defeat, not just for the Romans but for the Jews as well. It was undignified to be put to death at all. But to be put to death through crucifixion was humiliating. So Jesus takes this symbol of death of humiliation and turns it on its head. Because we see that it is not just the method of death that we give thanks to God for, it is just that Jesus Christ accepted his mission. So in a sense while the cross is important, what is more important is who died on the cross.

Bishop Fulton Sheen talked about how there were three spectators at the cross on Good Friday. There were the spectators of indifference, the spectators of pain, and then the spectators of love. The spectators of Indifference were really Jesus's executioners, and the ones who gambled for Jesus's cloak. They were just doing their job and Jesus meant nothing to them.

Then you have the spectators of pain. Some of those people looked at Jesus for that physical healing. What we have to understand is that while sometimes people are healed physically, what we really need is the healing of our spirits, the healing of our souls. We know that real physical pain can be an unfortunate occurrence. And Jesus went through pain. The martyrs have gone through pain. What made their pain different was their love. Jesus's love for the entirety of creation and the martyrs' imitation of that love is what made the difference. They offered themselves and they continued to offer themselves for their faith, and for their fellow persons.

Some understand the love that has been poured out for us, and the desire to share that love. There is a poem that Bishop Fulton Sheen referenced by Geoffrey Kennedy and it is called "Indifference."

"When Jesus came to Golgotha, they hanged Him on a tree.  
They drove great nails through hands and feet, and made it Calvary.  
For those were and cruel days and human flesh was cheap.  
They crowned Him with a crown of thorns, red were His wounds and deep,  
For those were crude and cruel days, and human flesh was cheap.  
When Jesus came to Birmingham they simply passed Him by,  
They never hurt a hair of Him, they only let Him die;  
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give Him pain,  
They only just passed down the street, and left Him in the rain.  
Still Jesus cried, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do,"  
And still it rained the wintry rain that drenched Him through and through;  
The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see,  
And Jesus crouched against a wall and cried for Calvary."

This poem has layers but one of the things it teaches us to do is to remember that Jesus said to disciples, "Those of you who do to the least of my brethren, then you to me." Hopefully, we still see Jesus, and hopefully, we do not pass him by.

As Deacon Terry mentioned last night in his homily during Holy Thursday, St. Mother Teresa said, "To find someone who is not loved, and love him." So on this day that we give thanks for our savior becoming man, living his life and dying on the cross — we ask ourselves, "What kind of spectators are we as we witness the crucifixion? And how do we reflect that?"

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