

Good Friday A/2008

No word, no speech, can replace the vivid drama of the passion of Jesus as we have lived in today's Gospel. No cry, no tears poured out in compassion of the suffering of Jesus will translate the tragedy of his passion. Perhaps only a deep sigh of the heart and an interior silence can lead us to commune with Jesus in his suffering. Where the words lose their strength, there only the heart can speak, because only the heart knows the limits of human speech. The scene of the passion can be approached only from within, when the soul, touched by what our beloved savior accepted to endure for our salvation, comes to understand that there is no greater love than to give one's life for the beloved ones.

The passion and death of Jesus are the proof of his love for us and for the whole of mankind. By his teaching and actions, Jesus has touched the lives of many, but he also made enemies. Jesus certainly saw his violent death coming on the horizon. He knew that his fate would not be different from that of the prophets who were persecuted in the past. Those who felt challenged in their behavior and their way of believing in God could not tolerate his teaching and his action. They wanted him to die and to leave them alone with their ways. But Jesus did not fear for his life. He assumed all that with courage, faithfulness and obedience in order to fulfill the mission the Father had entrusted to him.

As Isaiah says, "Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth". And yet, "it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured... He was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins; upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed".

The passion and death of Jesus are the decisive moments of his life that reveal who he is and what he did for our salvation. Jesus has accepted suffering in his body and the death on the cross in order to save us. His death is an expression of his love for us, a self-gift and a self-immolation for our sake. By so doing, Jesus becomes "the source of salvation for all who obey him".

As we meditate on the passion of Jesus, let us not forget that he endured all that suffering for our sins. What a wonderful way to make amends than to repent of our sins and to receive God's grace through the sacrament of reconciliation. May the passion of our Lord bring us to repentance and the conversion of heart so that we come to the celebration of Easter purified and cleansed from any stain of sin!

Isaiah 52, 13-53, 12; Hebrews 4, 14-16; 5, 7-9; John 18, 1-19, 42



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