

Good Friday A/2011

We have heard many stories of heroic people who, in wars or the occasion of dramatic events, like the burning of a building or a drowning of child in a canal, have given their lives in order to save their fellows.

When we hear such stories we remain speechless and struck not only by the bounty of the heroes but also by the generosity with which they act in order to save human lives. Such is the case of Jesus Christ and his passion.

In fact, no word, no speech, can replace the vivid drama of the passion of Jesus. No cry, no tears poured out in compassion of the suffering of Jesus can express correctly 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.

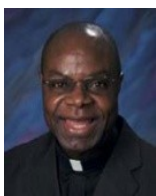
The passion and death of Jesus are the proof of his love for us and for the whole world. By his teaching and actions, Jesus touched the lives of many, but he also made enemies. Jesus certainly saw his violent death coming on the horizon. He knew that his fate would not be different from that of the prophets who were persecuted in the past. Those who felt challenged in their behavior and their ways of being 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 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".

Let us obey Jesus by repenting from our sins. May his passion lead us to the conversion of heart so that we celebrate Easter 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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