

APRIL 2, 2021
GOOD FRIDAY LITURGY
John 18: 1-19: 42

“THE CROSS IS THE SYMBOL OF LOVE!”

“A mother living in a tenement house went shopping for groceries. While she was in the store, a fire engine raced by. She wondered, “Is the fire engine going to my home?” She had left her baby asleep at home. Forgetting about the groceries, she ran toward home. Her building had fire hoses aimed at it. It was burning like a matchbox. Rushing to the chief she cried out, “My baby is up there.” He shouted back to her, “It would be suicide for anyone to go up there now; it’s too late.” A young fireman standing by, volunteered, “Chief, I have a little baby at home and if my house were on fire, I’d want someone to go up to save my baby. I’ll go.” The young fireman climbed the stairs; he got the baby, threw her into the rescue net and just as he did, the house collapsed, and he was burned to death. 20 years later at a graveside, a 20-year-old woman is sobbing softly. Before her, at the head of this grave, is the statue of a fireman. A man stopping by asks respectfully, ‘Was that your father?’ She replies, ‘No.’ ‘Was that your brother?’ ‘No,’ she says. ‘That’s the man who died for me.’”¹

My brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ is the man who died for you, for me, for all of us. He is the One who saved us all through the Cross, the symbol of His greatest love for each one of us. According to Pope Francis: “The cross is the holy sign of God’s Love and a sign of Jesus’ Sacrifice, and is not to be reduced to a superstitious object or an ornamental necklace. If we want to be God’s disciples, we are called to imitate him, expending our life unreservedly out of love of God and neighbor. At the prospect that Jesus may fail and die on the cross, Peter himself resists and says to Him: ‘God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you!’ (Matthew 16: 22),” He believes in Jesus; he wants

¹ www.stories4homilies.co

to follow Him but does not accept that His glory will pass through the Passion. Pope Francis further said, “for Peter and the other disciples – but for us too! – the cross is something uncomfortable, a ‘scandal,’ but for Jesus, the real ‘scandal’ would be to escape the cross and avoid the Father’s will, the mission that the Father has entrusted to Him for our salvation.”²

My brothers and sisters, the pain and suffering, passion and death of Jesus Christ were the most agonizing and horrible suffering that one may experience. But He did that not for Him for our sake – the greatest love that one may give, sacrificing one’s life for one’s friend. The cross is love itself – giving up all things for us. “The Cross of Christ is the safeguard of our faith, the assurance of our hope, and the throne of love. It is also the sign of God’s mercy and the proof of forgiveness. By his cross Jesus Christ has pardoned us and set us free from the tyranny of sin. He paid the price for us when he made atonement for our sins. The way to peace, joy, and righteousness in the kingdom of God and the way to victory over sin and corruption, fear and defeat, despair and death is through the cross of Jesus Christ.”³

By our Good Friday liturgy, we are being reminded of the path that we may also follow and traverse. This path is the only way to holiness and be one with Him as He said: “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me,”⁴ the mantra of discipleship. When we are encountered with difficulties, problems, and suffering, let us look at the cross, let us look at Jesus who died for us because He loved us so much. By our suffering and death, too, we will be saved. So, my brothers and sisters, let us follow our Lord Jesus in the way of the cross and die with Him with joy, hope, and confidence because at the end, we will also be triumphant.

² www.catholicnewsagency.com Aug 30, 2020

³ www.dailyscripture.net

⁴ Matthew 16: 24 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

