

Holy Week – Good Friday 2014 “OUT OF LOVE FOR YOU”

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

Yesterday, at the celebration of our Lord's Last Supper, we pondered the DEEPER QUESTIONS to life:
"WHY DO I EXIST? and WHAT HAPPENS TO ME AFTER I DIE?"

To get at the HEART of these questions, we MUST turn to All that is to be found inside the BIBLE – God's Word – and we need to UNDERSTAND 2 things: where the **CENTER of the Old Testament LIES as well as the CENTER of the New Testament!**

The CENTER of the Old Testament is **THE EXODUS EVENT** – the time when God's Chosen People, ISRAEL, were rescued from the clutches of Egypt by means of the 10 Plagues. God's Salvific rescue Mission serves to organize the Old Testament in such a way that every story before hand leads up to the Exodus and everything that follows has to do with what happened **after the Exodus.**

And if we had to SUM UP in one word the very meaning of the Exodus Event, we would sum it all up with this one word: "**COVENANT**" – **Everything is about Covenant!**

Let's just STEP INTO THE DETAILS of what I'm talking about here for a minute: if there's Exodus – it's because **THERE'S SACRIFICE**. How did they get out of Egypt? They got out BECAUSE a **Lamb was Sacrificed** and his blood was spread upon the doorpost to save them from the **ANGEL OF DEATH**... That's called **SACRIFICE**.

The SACRIFICE of the Lamb is what sealed the Covenant – in other words – **BLOOD HAD TO BE SHED THERE**...

Let's **CONNECT ALL OF THIS with our experience**: yesterday was Holy Thursday – the beginning of the Triduum – and our first reading was all about the **'Exodus and the Sacrifice – the Slaughtering of the Lamb...**' That's where the TRIDUUM begins!!

The TRIDUUM BEGINS WITH **THE CENTER of the Exodus Event!!!**

And now – what's JUST UNFOLDED before our very eyes is God's Only Begotten Son, Jesus – forging a **'New and Eternal Covenant'** in his **BLOOD OF SACRIFICE**...

On one hand, at this very moment, we stand beneath the cross wondering: "How in the world did things ever get to this point?"

On the other hand, last night, during the course of his Last Supper, our Lord CLEARLY and EXPLICITLY revealed in great detail what was due to happen to him this day. **Not only that, but He did so within the context of a sacred meal while issuing a command to all those who believe in Him**

Follow me with this because the liturgy itself teaches us to **string together Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and that which is to come after Our Lord's descent into Hell** – the TIME OF HIS RESURRECTION – all of that is ONE MOVEMENT of God in TIME.

During his Last Supper, the Savior picked up **Bread and Wine** and he gave them a very precise meaning – the meaning of His DEATH! He used very precise language; **'This is the chalice of my blood, a New Covenant in MY blood shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.'**

The Apostles, in the context of the supper HAVE NO IDEA THAT THE LORD IS ABOUT TO DIE...

Here we see Jesus already giving us a **crucial UNDERSTANDING of his death prior to its happening**, which we are not to underestimate, his death is not easy to understand... For as an event in and of itself, IT SURE SEEMS LIKE ABSOLUTELY THE END OF EVERYTHING... so what's he doing?

He's giving us a ***SIGN*** before it happens. And among the things he's saying, as he said before, '***No one takes my life from me - I have the power to lay it down and to take it up again, this command I have received from the Father.***'

Here our Lord is in his Hour, ***HE IS SOVEREIGN...***

CALVARY began last night!!! With the ***SIGN*** of Last Night's Supper! And all the detailed KNOWLEDGE concerning the up and coming Event of His Sacrifice even before it even Happens; ***SHOWS US***, His very **Action**, REVEALS to us that ***this is GOD!!!***

For this man – Jesus Christ – He knew exactly what He was doing, and He went on to tell us everything that was going to happen before it came to pass! **Who can do that on any given day?** Never mind with **CLARITY, DETAIL and MEANING...** Summoning up ALL the Words of the Old Testament, the CENTRAL EVENT of those words, which is **EXODUS / PASSOVER / COVENANT** and re-capitulating the entire meaning of all that in HIMSELF!!!

ONLY GOD could pull off something of this MAGNITUDE – **and He Does...** And all the while, as this is unfolding right before them, the Apostles are sitting there like 12 DEER in the HEADLIGHTS – completely unable to grasp what he's doing as He says:

'This is FOR YOU... my death will be LIFE FOR YOU!! My death will accomplish the FORGIVENESS OF SINS FOR YOU... my death CREATES A NEW COVENANT FOREVER!!!!

All of that I chose to do out of LOVE for you..."

Long before 3:00 pm on Good Friday – Jesus let himself **BE GIVEN OVER TO DEATH...** but without that Teaching, without last night's ***SIGN***: his death of today looks like a failed, diluted Messiah. That's what it looks like!

And that's what it continues to look like to everyone who FAILS to connect all 3 of these Most Sacred Days in the ONE SINGULAR MOMENT EVENT.

Good number of years ago, **9 children competing in the Special Olympics** lined up for the 100-yard dash. The starting gun went off and the race was on!

But only a few yards into the race, one of the Special Olympians ***fell to the ground and started crying...*** ALL OF THE OTHER 8 CHILDREN stopped in their tracks – they all came back to help their fallen comrade.

A young girl with Down's Syndrome **kissed him and brushed him off.** They then decided to lift him up together and all of them proceeded, arm in arm, to run over the finish line.

The audience rose to their feet in applause – for on that day there wasn't just one winner – **there were 9 winners...**

Yesterday, I touched upon the JOURNEY OF LIFE as one that takes in ***The Past, The Present***, in the hope of ***The Future*** to come. We watched the journey of a caterpillar seeking to find the answers to life's **DEEPER MEANING**. We contemplated how true change comes upon us when we spend time **INSIDE THE COCOON OF TRANSFORMATION.**

Today, we see Christ on the cross, we see the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End **choosing to allow himself to be stopped in his tracks** – CHOOSING to help us get up from our FALL into Sin – and soon, to help us rise again out from our FALL into Death...

With his having breathed his last breath but just a few moments ago, we are left standing here – **staring at the shell of his earthly cocoon nailed to a cross.** If you look close enough, you'll see for yourself the following inscriptions etched upon the shell of his body.

1. **For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son...**
2. **At the Foot of the Cross – all of Creation is MADE NEW...**
3. **"Love one another as I have loved you..."**