

DATE: 14TH APRIL, 2017

GOOD FRIDAY

THEME: "IN HOC SIGNO VINCES"

There is a legend about Emperor Constantine, a third century emperor, who on his way to our battle, PRAYED to God for assistance and the sign of the cross appeared on the sky and a voice said, 'In this sign, you will win'.

My dear brothers and sisters, the message is still the same: in the cross is our victory. But the tragedy of today is that this message has either been distorted or completely discarded. This is succinctly captured by Fulton Sheen in his Life of Christ when he wrote: "I believe that the whole political and religious situation of the world can be summed up in terms of the divorce of Christ from His cross. Put the cross-less Christ on the right side, and the Christ-less Cross of Christ on the left. Who picks up the cross-less Christ? Our decadent Western civilization. Christ is weak, effeminate, with no authority to drive buyers and sellers out of temples, and never speaks of self-discipline, restraint and mortification. Who picks up the Christ-less Cross? Russia and China, where there is a dedication to a common ideology, the use of discipline and authority to keep peace and order. But neither can heal.

The cross-less Christ leaves men burdened with their guilt which festers in a thousand neuroses and psychoses. The Christ-less Cross cannot save for it ends in Dachau, the Gulag Archipelago and the squeezing of the lives of millions like grapes to make the collective wine of the State."

The cross without Christ is represents the misery that human beings have plunged themselves into, by its rejection of God: emotional, psychological and physical tortures. The Christ without the Cross is the false gospel of today where you are told you are not meant to

suffer, the prosperity gospel. The truth lies somewhere between, there can never be Christ without the Cross. Even after the resurrection, the mark of the cross was still the mark by which he was recognized (John 20:2-29). There can be no Christ without the Cross.

The salvation that Jesus won on the cross is an objective one. It is salvation for believers and unbelievers alike, Jews and Gentiles etc but that salvation is something each one has to work out for himself or herself, “work out your salvation in fear and in trembling”. On the Cross, the will of Jesus was aligned to the will of God, and this is the only way that we can benefit from the Cross: “not my will but your will be done”.

The scope of that salvation is limitless. It is an all-encompassing salvation. In the sorrowful mystery, the Church presents us the high points of the passion of Christ for our meditation:

1. The prayer and the agony in the garden: in this, Christ unites himself with all who have passed or are still passing through some emotional pains.
2. The Scourging at the Pillar: in this, Christ unites himself with those passing through some physical pains and illnesses.
3. Crowning with Thorns: in this, Christ unites himself with all who are passing through the psychological pains of being made to feel less than who you are or worthless.
4. Carrying of the Cross: in this, Christ unites himself with those who bear burdens of another upon themselves just to help them up.
5. The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord: in this, Christ unites himself with all who sacrifice their time and energy at the service of others: the mother who gives up everything just for the child, the wife or husband who sacrifices his comfort for the unity of the family etc. Jesus was there before you and for you, and these he took to the Cross that you may be free of them. Matthew 8:17 says, “he took our indignities and bore our sicknesses”. Again, the inscription on the cross of Christ is

written in three languages: Hebrew, Latin and Greek. Hebrew was the language of religion, Greek was the language of Commerce and Latin was the language of Government. (Fulton Sheen). Such is the scope of the salvation Jesus has won for you; in your spiritual life, in your socio-politico life and in your economic life. It is all-encompassing salvation. So, Christ is not to be pocketed and dusted only for Sunday worship. He should be part of our daily lives.

It is for a good reason that when the Priest blesses you, especially at mass, he does so with the sign of the cross. He does so in order to remind you that the little crosses that come your way daily is meant to be a blessing but, more importantly, to remind you that, ultimately, in the Cross of Christ is your salvation.

“Unless there is a Good Friday in our lives, there will never be an Easter Sunday. The Cross is the condition of the empty tomb, and the crown of thorns is the preface to the halo of light.” – Fulton Sheen

Peace Be With You!