

LENT: A PILGRIMAGE WITH JESUS TO THE CROSS

Today is the 5th Sunday of Lent. When life comes to an end, our natural tendency is to prepare ourselves, prepare others, and take care of the details that we leave behind. Jesus, too, had some details to take care of. As the eldest son of Mary, he was responsible for her well-being. Mary was by now a widow, it seems, and needed the men in her life – her sons – to care for her. Without it, she would suffer poverty, hardship and perhaps abuse. So the Lord “adopted” his mother into the life of his friend, the disciple John. And tradition has it that John took care of her as if she was his own mother, bringing her to Ephesus with him to live out her years.

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT: Zechariah 12:10 & John 19:25-27.

¹⁰ Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the family of David and on the people of Jerusalem. They will look on me whom they have pierced and mourn for him as for an only son. They will grieve bitterly for him as for a firstborn son who has died.

²⁵ Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved (John), he said to her, “Dear woman, here is your son.” ²⁷ And he said to John, “Here is your mother.” And from then on this disciple took her into his home.

Meditation by Tim Klauke

Some years ago I was in my home kneeling for evening prayers. I was sick. I wanted to crawl in bed and moan. As it was, I was contemplating Jesus' passion and suffering.

“Jesus,” I said aloud, “I don't get it. You cared for people in the midst of your intense pain. I can't imagine caring for others when I feel like crap – even if it's the right thing to do.”

Jesus' voice sounded right back: “Striving to do the ‘right thing’ will never be enough. But love? Now, that's an entirely different story.”

Epiphany light shone in my head. “Even now in my ill condition, would I persist through adversity for my wife? Of course! I love her. Would I put myself out for my children? Of course! I love them.”

“And so it must be for me,” came the voice of Jesus. “You need love to be able to follow me.”

As Jesus was enduring the torture of a cross, love provided the clarity of his last words. Love for his captors. Love for those crucified with him. Love for the Father. And yes, love for his mom and his best friend – the kind of love that assured her she'd be cared for in her eldest son's absence.

She gave birth to him, after all! Her love preceded his in this realm of earth. Yet into her heart of love, grieving at the confusing loss of this child of promise, came her son's love, assuring her that in his messiah endeavours, she was not forgotten. Yes, for her, too, there was love. Love to receive. Love to walk in. Love to live out of.

Questions inviting response:

- For the next 10 minutes cloister yourself in silence and solitude in order to reflect upon Christ's love for you. Think about the realities of his providing love. Reflect on the people that he has put in your life to provide for you – family, friends, even strangers that have crossed your path.
- Who has Christ given to you the responsibility of providing for? If asked, would they thankfully tell stories of your sacrificial love for them?
- Read John 13:34-35. The act of loving others identifies to the world those who follow Jesus. Period. As your journey through Lent continues, make a decision to sacrifice something in order to provide for someone else, as an expression of Christ's sacrifice for you. Do it quietly, anonymously if you can, seeking nothing but the joy of providing in Christ's name.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ. You are a perfect reflection of the Father, and of His incredible love for each one of us. I come to you in deep humility, today, thanking you for loving me, and for teaching me how to love. I ask that you will pour into

me the grace and love of your Spirit, and that I will love others as you love me. And I ask that I will pay special attention to those that I know you have given me special responsibility of caring for.

I bless you today, Lord, and thank you for this journey of Lent and what it teaches me about you and about myself.

Amen.