



Racine Dominicans
Committed to Truth + Compelled to Justice

PRAY, PONDER, PREACH AND PRACTICE THE WORD OF GOD

Facilitated by Racine Dominican Preaching Committee

May 2021

The Cross as Triumphant?

I've had trouble with this expression. Maybe you have too. How on earth can we understand an instrument of torture to be a cause for triumph? Triumph comes with the resurrection, right? But what is the 'law of the cross' that makes this death instrument also a cause of triumph?

The answer hit me like a ton of bricks in reading through some old notes. The cross is the symbol of every tear, every pain, every evil, every torture, every despicable human experience we can name. It's that part of life that we wish we could do away with. It's physical or emotional, and yes, even spiritual suffering, all too familiar to each of us as it comes our way. The key is in what happens to it. What happens to the cross?

This instrument of torture is changed. It has become holy. A part of our Good Friday liturgy is the 'Adoration of the Cross.' Why do we 'adore' the cross? What has happened? The Paschal Mystery has become a transformation mystery. Which means, by the way, that it is a revelation of what happens to all our grief this side of the grave. It's not going away. It's going to be transformed. Yes, you've got that right...no drop of our suffering will be lost. It is going to be transformed into something beautiful. So bite your lip and hang on.

Manure is awful stuff. It smells. It's rotten. You wouldn't keep it in the kitchen. But this awful stuff, just as awful as it is, when it is put out in the field, makes the most wonderful vegetables. Life comes from that rotten stuff, and life comes from the cross, not despite it. The 'law of the cross' is that every evil, even death, will be transformed into something good because that is what love does. Our challenge is to believe it: that even our stubborn arthritis will be transformed. The risen Jesus carries his wounds, but they are no longer ugly. They are his badges of honor. And we? What clues will we find in these post-Easter readings of the triumph to come?

Really?

*You're going to transform everything I've been through?
What can I say but "Bring it on... My Lord and my God!"*

Thank you to Associate Mare Wheeler for this month's reflections.

Sunday, May 2nd

In the Sunday's liturgy for May 2, we find the gardener's anthem in John's Gospel (John 15:1-8). The vine and branches theme winds in and out through this month's readings. As we ready the earth for planting, we plant our hearts and minds with the truth we find in Jesus and in the Good News.



Sunday, May 9th

Jesus takes that planting theme to the next level in the reading for May 9 in John 15:9-17. The love that Jesus has imparted is the seed of our love for one another, the living fruit that will flourish, feed and bless all. What does that fruit look like for us?

Sunday, May 16th

In the Gospel for May 16 in John 17:11-19, Jesus prays for us, and prays for our joy. He confirms what we might have long suspected, that we are no more centered in this world than He is. What Jesus asks is that we center ourselves, set ourselves not in the world of illusion, but in Truth.

Sunday, May 23rd

Locked doors are different from locked minds. The Spirit on this Pentecost on May 23rd in John 20:10-23 has no trouble entering locked doors. Locked minds are quite another matter! So Jesus asks for a spirit of willingness, of reception. "Receive the Holy Spirit." (verse 23). Am I willing to be willing to receive? With the Holy Spirit, locked doors fly open, and locked minds are freed. Where will this Spirit take me?

Sunday, May 30th

On this final Sunday, May 30, Jesus makes the desired future action plain, even in the midst of our doubt and confusion. The salient verb in Matthew 28:16-20 is "Go!" The seeds that Jesus planted, matured and blossomed into the freedom of the Spirit, are meant to be shared freely with all.