

INTRODUCTION

Last week's meditation on Fraternal Love, challenges us Christ disciples to look into our ordinary lives and examine how we put into practice His new commandment: *"Love one another; you must love one another just as I have loved you. It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognise you as my disciples"* (John 13: 34-35, NJB). This new commandment from Jesus is not something that we do not know; on the contrary this is our very experience of his unconditional love. *"If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you must wash each other's feet. I have given you an example, so that you may copy what have I done to you"* (Jn. 13:14-15). And so now is our turn to love others in his same quality of loving.

However, our experiences proved that loving in this way is not always "as easy as we say it" than in the practice, most especially when we are challenge to love our enemies and conflictive neighbours. More often, to love the unlovable seemed to be a gigantic and unbearable cross for us to carry and so we give up and resigned in loving.

A priest once said, "Fraternal love is a bleeding process". It is truly indeed because it's impossible to love in an unconditional way without first carrying our cross and dying to ourselves. *"In all truth I tell you, unless a wheat grain falls into the earth and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest"* (John 12:24).

This week we will take another step in our following of Christ, the unique significance of the cross. *"The path of the Lord is a road of humility, a road that*

ends in the Cross" (Cf. Pope Francis, 3/14/13, Homily). As committed disciples of Jesus, we have learned from the Master that the cross is no longer a matter of option, but rather a necessity for the journey. Even the Son of God, who was abandoned in his darkest hour by everyone, even his friends, (Jesus) managed after a struggle to say Yes. *"My Father, if this (cup) cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done"* (Mt.26:42). *"...it is for this reason that I have come to this hour."* (Jn.12:27). *"I have loved them to the very end, even up to the cross and beyond"* (cf. Jn.13:1).

Moreover, embracing the cross in our following will not only lead us to perfection in love but it also guarantees our perseverance in the following of Christ most especially in moments of trials, doubts, sufferings, temptations and even in death.

Lastly, let us also learn from the life and testimony of Sts. Peter and Paul of the necessity of the cross in the perseverance in the following of Christ.

Monday

"the cross is no longer a matter of option, but rather a necessity for the journey"

Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also

will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me. "I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it and will glorify it again." Jn 12:23-28

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you." He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do." Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Mt. 16:21-25

"Apart from the cross there is no other ladder by which we may get to heaven".
St Rose of Lima

Tuesday

"The Cross of Christ is a symbol of His unconditional love"

...He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. Jn.13:1

For you know that the price of your ransom from the futile way of life handed down from your ancestors was paid, not in anything perishable like silver or gold, but in precious blood as of a

blameless and spotless lamb, Christ. He was marked out before the world was made, and was revealed at the final point of time for your sake.

Through him you now have faith in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory for this very purpose -- that your faith and hope should be in God. 1 Pt.1:18-21

The life that I am now living, subject to the limitation of human nature, I am living in faith, faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Gal.2:20

Wednesday

"The Cross of Christ is a folly to the world, but for those of us who are on the road to salvation it is the power of God"

The message of the cross is folly for those who are on the way to ruin, but for those of us who are on the road to salvation it is the power of God. As scripture says: I am going to destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of any who understand. Where are the philosophers? Where are the experts? And where are the debaters of this age? Do you not see how God has shown up human wisdom as folly? Since in the wisdom of God the world was unable to recognise God through wisdom, it was God's own pleasure to save believers

through the folly of the gospel. While the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom, we are preaching a crucified Christ: to the Jews an obstacle they cannot get over, to the gentiles foolishness, but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is both the power of God and the wisdom of God. God's folly is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. 1 Co.1:18-25

Thursday

“The Cross of Christ is our strength in our sufferings”

But we hold this treasure in pots of earthenware, so that the immensity of the power is God's and not our own. We are subjected to every kind of hardship, but never distressed; we see no way out but we never despair; we are pursued but never cut off; knocked down, but still have some life in us; always we carry with us in our body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus, too, may be visible in our body. Indeed, while we are still alive, we are continually being handed over to death, for the sake of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus, too, may be visible in our mortal flesh. In us, then, death is at work; in you, life. 2 Co.4: 7-12

Who can bring any accusation against those that God has chosen? When God grants saving justice who can condemn? Are we not sure that it is Christ Jesus, who died -- yes and more, who was raised from the dead and is at God's right

hand -- and who is adding his plea for us? Can anything cut us off from the love of Christ -- can hardships or distress, or persecution, or lack of food and clothing, or threats or violence; as scripture says: For your sake we are being massacred all day long, treated as sheep to be slaughtered? No; we come through all these things triumphantly victorious, by the power of him who loved us. For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nothing already in existence and nothing still to come, nor any power, nor the heights nor the depths, nor any created thing whatever, will be able to come between us and the love of God, known to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Ro.8:33-39

Friday

“The Cross of Christ attracts us to persevere up to the very end”

As for me, my life is already being poured away as a libation, and the time has come for me to depart. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; all there is to come for me now is the crown of uprightness which the Lord, the upright judge, will give to me on that Day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for his appearing... But the Lord stood by me and gave me power, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed for all the gentiles to hear; and so I was saved from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from all evil attempts on me, and bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To

him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. 2 Tim. 4:6-8, 17-18

“If you carry your cross joyfully, it will carry you.” Thomas A. Kempis

Saturday

“The Cross of Christ impulses our passion for the salvation of others”

Here I am, ready to come to you for the third time and I am not going to be a burden on you: it is not your possessions that I want, but yourselves. Children are not expected to save up for their parents, but parents for their children, and I am more than glad to spend what I have and to be spent for the sake of your souls. Is it because I love you so much more, that I am loved the less;... All this time you have been thinking that we have been pleading our own cause before you; no, we have been speaking in Christ and in the presence of God -- and all, dear friends, to build you up. I am afraid that in one way or another, when I come, I may find you different from what I should like you to be, and you may find me what you would not like me to be; so that in one way or the other there will be rivalry, jealousy, bad temper, quarrels, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorders; and when I come again, my God may humiliate me in front of you and I shall be grieved by all those who sinned in the past and have still not repented of the impurities and sexual immorality and debauchery that they have committed. 2 Co.12:14-15, 19-21

Verbum Dei

GUIDELINES FOR PRAYER

“...He loved his own in the world and he loved them up to the cross and beyond”. (cf.

Jn.13:1)



Objective of the Week
to appreciate the unique significance of the cross in our following of Christ.

June 24-30, 2013

13th Sunday

1st Reading: 1 Kgs 19:16, 19-21

Psalm: Ps. 16

2nd Reading: Gal.5:1,13-18

Gospel: Lk 9:51-62