

SUPERIOR GENERAL'S HOLY WEEK MESSAGE 2015



Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends in the Passionist Family,

My greetings and prayers accompany you as, together, we begin this special time of Holy Week, taking up our cross and walking with Jesus in his Passion, Death and Resurrection. May it be a time of deep consolation and an experience of solidarity and renewal in Christ, and with the suffering of all of humanity and creation.

The Good Friday experience is the same every year. In most places around the world, churches are full to capacity on this day – Christians, and others, coming together to show their respect and admiration for Jesus, and to worship him as the Saviour of the world.

“Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

You are the Saviour of the world!”

We, Passionists, preach Christ Crucified, who is “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1Cor.1:24).

Jesus is the power of God because in and through his person, God has destroyed death forever and restored life; he has triumphed over evil and sin which keeps us lost in hopelessness, and he has opened for us the way to salvation, filling our lives and our future with hope. Through the power of the Cross, Jesus has redeemed the world!

Jesus is the wisdom of God because by accepting our human condition, by sharing in our human weakness, and by suffering and dying, he has given meaning to our humanity which is loved by God.



If you have ever cried out to God in pain and seemed to receive no answer, turn to Jesus and remember that he has experienced this before you. If you have ever been restless, searching for human comfort and not finding it, Jesus has experienced it before you. He can empathise with you in your anger in time of bereavement, in your loneliness, in your helplessness, because he, too, has been part of it. If you have felt the pain of rejection, of failure, of scorn, share your experiences with Jesus and learn from him as he shares his experiences with you.

The philosopher, Blaise Pascal once wrote: *"Jesus will be in agony till the end of the world."*

The event of Christ's crucifixion and death that took place at Calvary is not an event back there, or a struggle out there. Rather, it is an event just as real today, because that same Christ is today suffering and dying within each of us. When we have accepted that truth, then we will also be accepting the truth of Christ rising in us.

Yes, as St Paul says: the language of the Cross is illogical and it is madness to those who do not believe; but to those who do believe – to us Passionists – the Cross is *"the power and the wisdom of God."*

The author Elie Weitzel relates a true story from the Second World War which may give us some food for reflection....

Some years after the Second World War, a man who had been through the concentration camp at Auschwitz was telling his story to a Greek Orthodox monk. Three of his fellow prisoners had escaped, and when they couldn't be found, the commandant of the camp thought he'd make an example for the others. So, in front of the assembled prisoners, he got three scaffolds built, picked three men at random and hanged them.

Two of the men hanged died immediately, but the third, an emaciated teenage boy, was not heavy enough for his neck to break; and all had to watch his struggles on the end of the rope as he gradually strangled to death.

As the man telling his story filed past, he heard someone from behind him say under his breath: "Where is God now? There is no God!" And almost immediately the answer came to his mind: "My God is dangling there on the end of that rope."

As he came to the end of his story, the monk sat silently, until eventually he added: "And your God was there in the staring eyes of the crowd also, helpless in the face of such human monstrosity."

There is the Passion of Jesus! The Passion of Jesus continues in our life and in the life of every suffering man, woman and child in our world. The Passion of Christ continues in the lives of those who put them to such suffering, and in the lives of those helpless in the face of it.

To all those who suffer, the suffering and agony of the Cross speaks a message of great significance. It tells us that we are not alone in our physical and mental pain and darkness. God, in Christ, is there with us too. He knows and He cares.



Photo Credits: The Passion of the Christ .2004. Icon Productions

**“The Cross of Christ is like a hand stretched out to comfort and befriend;
it is neither an answer to the problem of suffering
nor a promise of a mighty miracle worker who would intervene
to put an end to the suffering caused by the greed of others.
His is the touch and whisper of one who has been over the jagged stones
and returns to show the way and heal the wounds.”**

May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in your hearts, so that the Life of Jesus may be in you.

A blessed Easter joy to you, your family and loved ones!

Fraternally,



FR. JOACHIM REGO, C.P.
SUPERIOR GENERAL

