

Good Friday - The Passion of the Mystical Body - Church - 2019

- ◆ I have given at least eight homilies on the Passion of Christ and Our Lady of Sorrows.
- ◆ I taught three classes in the past two weeks on the Passion of Christ
- ◆ and showed a video, which I made, three times as well.
- ◆ Yet, when I meditate on the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, most often I meditate on the Passion of the Mystical Body, the Church.

St. Paul says in Colossians: 1: 24

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the Church.

What does that mean? There was nothing lacking in Jesus suffering and death!

What is lacking is our choice, our decision, to join Jesus and allow His saving grace to effect our Salvation; to do all we can to help others to accept Jesus' Mercy and be saved.

And, today, to do this, we must walk our way of the Cross and endure our Passion in the Church

Remember, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, in 1976, in Philadelphia, at the Eucharistic Congress said,

*We **are now** standing in the face of the greatest historical confrontation humanity has **ever** experienced.*

- ◆ *I do not think that the wide circle of the American Society, or the whole wide circle of the Christian Community, realize this fully.*
- ◆ *We are now facing the **final** confrontation between the Church and the anti-church,*
- ◆ *between the gospel and the anti-gospel,*
- ◆ *between Christ and the antichrist.*
- ◆ *This confrontation lies within the plans of Divine Providence.*
- ◆ ***It is a test** of 2000 years of culture and Christian civilization **with all the consequences** for human dignity, individual rights, human rights and the rights of nations.*
- ◆ *It is, therefore, **in God's Plan**, and it must be a trial which the Church must take up, and face courageously.*

◆ In 1969, Father Josef Ratzinger, now Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, said,

From the crisis of today the Church of tomorrow will emerge—a Church that has lost much. She will become small and will have to start afresh more or less from the beginning. She will no longer be able to inhabit many of the edifices she built in prosperity. As the number of her adherents diminishes, so will she lose many of her social privileges. In contrast to an earlier age, she will be seen much more as a voluntary society, entered only by free decision. As a small society, she will make much bigger demands on the initiative of her individual members

Surely we see the Church suffering it's Way of the Cross, it's Passion, today and all around us.

- ★ The Church is suffering its Passion in different ways in different parts of the World:
- ★ We are in the Garden of Gethsemane: In the Garden, Jesus took all our sins upon Him, all the sins ever committed and all the sins that would ever be committed; His suffering was so great that He sweat blood.
- ★ The Church in the Garden is taken its own sins upon its body,...
- ★ Jesus was betrayed by His own Apostle.
- ★ The Church is betrayed by many, including it's own prelates
- ★ The entire Mystical Body is suffering from this.
- ★ Jesus was put on trial in front of the Sanhedrin, accused falsely, beaten and blasphemed against.

The Mystical Body is being tried everywhere.

- If we even disagree with the ideological perversions of the world's liberal views, we are punished.
- If we stand up for Christian marriage, human sexuality as ordained by God, we are punished.
- In England and Canada (and America to lesser degree) we are fined and imprisoned for not embracing the worlds gender and sexual mores.
- In Europe we are mocked and spit upon and discriminated against.

- Not counting the fire at Notre Dame, there have been eight arsons in French Catholic Churches in the past two weeks, i.e. St. Sulpis.

Jesus was scourged beyond a person's capacity to survive. He was wrongly condemned to die, made to carry His Cross on the Way to Calvary where He was nailed to that Cross and died.

- The Mystical Body is being scourged, condemned to die and execution, sometimes even crucified in many countries around the world.
- In Islamic countries it is a capital crime to be Christian. In some African countries, like Nigeria, Churches are being set on fire and bombed - during Mass. The Church in China is being systematically persecuted.

How do we, how do each of us respond to this persecution? How will we when it's even worse? What choices do we make.

Do we realize that our choices are the **one and only thing** we have that we did not receive from God, and, yet, **our choices** are the one and only thing that we will be judged on, not our intelligence, but our choices.

We choose Christ - or we choose the world - which is in contradiction to Him.

We can decide if we want to **believe** Our Lord and follow Him, or Not!
God **IS** Truth!

We can decide to ignore the Truth, or we can decide to disobey the Truth.
But, contrary to popular opinion, **we cannot decide "What is True!"**
The Truth has already been decided!
God, the Author of all Truth, has decided that from the very beginning.

But that is the problem today, isn't it!

We think that with our enlightened minds, we can decide what is True! We cannot!

But today, we have ideologues everywhere:

in the government, in the media, in entertainment and in our universities.

It is believed by the disciples of that ideology that it can't be falsified. If you start with the assumption that nothing can falsify your argument, then all data that would reasonably show the argument to be wrong must be reinterpreted to make everything fit, even if this means accepting outrageous conclusions.

For instance, if you don't want to accept that a God exists, then you also have to deny creation, and even, intelligent design. That's crazy!

We all ask the same question as Pontius Pilate, "What is Truth?" And then like Pilate...

When we hear the truth, **WE decide** whether it is really the truth after all - or not.

Let's look at the choices made on Holy Thursday and Good Friday, and think of our choices..

- **Judas:** chose to betray Christ, his friend, the Son of God, for financial gain. He traded the Author of Life's life for silver.
- **Christ** responded with a "look of love," Judas chose despair and suicide.
- In the Garden, **Jesus** chose to follow His Father's Will, instead of His own human will.
- **Peter:** chose to deny Christ out of fear and "political correctness."
- **Christ** responded with a look of love,"
- **Peter** responded with tears, sorrow and remorse.
- **The Jewish Leaders:** the religious leaders, Jesus didn't meet their expectations of what **they decided** the Savior should be. They chose to deny Him, to seek Jesus' death by lying and accusing Him of blasphemy and later insurrection.

- **Caiaphas:** The Chief Priest, who should have been Christ's greatest ally and a future saint. Instead, he chose to remain in power and to deny Christ, His authority, and to deny the Father in order to maintain **their status quo**.
- **Pilate:** He wanted the Truth and accepted the "truth" until it became politically expedient to deny the **very author of that Truth**. He had Christ scourged in order to win over the temple leaders while saving Christ's life. But when it wasn't enough, he chose to knowingly sentence the innocent creator of Life to death to maintain his career.
- **Herod:** the King of Hollywood, he wanted Jesus to entertain him and his guests with a miracle or two. When Jesus refused, Herod declared Jesus to be insane and irrelevant and sent Him back to Pilate in the garment of the insane.
- **The executioners:** they chose to beat and torture Our Lord to near death for thrills.
- **The Crowd:** They could have turned everything around, they could've chosen to spare Jesus, instead they chose a true insurrectionist and a convicted murder, Barabbas, over their Savior, and demanded that Jesus be crucified.
- **Veronica:** She chose to brave the hostile crowd and the danger of being beaten by the soldiers in order to offer the consoling act of wiping Jesus' face.
- **Simon, the Cyrenian:** Chose to give up his comfort and assist Our Lord in carrying His cross.
- **Bad thief:** Had everything to gain and nothing to lose, yet, he chose to join the crowd who had crucified Jesus and mocked Our Lord.
- **The Good Thief:** On the other hand, chose to defend Christ and asked for Christ's remembrance in His kingdom. Now he's **St. Dismas**.
- **St. John:** Chose to follow Jesus to the very end while risking his own life in the process.
- **The Apostles:** most of them chose to watch from a safe distance.
- **Our Lady:** Chose to offer Her own Son and her own soul in union with Jesus in His suffering as our Co-Redemptrix.
- **Jesus** chose to forgive those who crucified Him and all sinners.
- **St. Longinus:** Followed orders by piercing Our Lord's heart, but chose to accept the graces offered to him by Our Lord. He became a Christian, a bishop and a saint.

All but six of these persons: denied Jesus and aided in His death. **They decided** - He was not the Messiah they wanted. He was not the warrior king, the mighty ruler. He disappointed them. He lost His popularity. They began to hate Him. They chose to kill Him. They decided that He was not who they wanted for their king; so, instead, they choose Caesar as their king. They did not want the **real Messiah**, but the Messiah of their own making who would fulfill **their desires**; for power, riches and comfort. Instead of choosing the "Source of all Life," **they chose Barabbas**, a convicted murderer.

We face the same choices in our own lives

- We can accept the real Jesus for who He really is, follow Him, and stand with Him,
- or we can reject Him when we feel when His message is too hard or too unpopular.
- We can decide if we want to believe Him or
- We can rely on our **sophisticated and enlightened** minds and we can decide "**what is truth**" ourselves.

If we decide that abortion is, "sort-of alright" for rape victims, or in developing and over-populated countries, or in other certain circumstances...

If we decide that same-sex couples have a God-given right to marriage and that it's OK!

If we decide that Birth Control and abortifacients are alright - especially in our own personal circumstances, then, **“are we or are we not, choosing Barabbas?”**

When we choose political correctness or expediency or “unqualified” tolerance, then are we not acting like Pilate, like the Jewish leaders, like the crowd.

Are we not choosing **Caesar as our King**,
And are we not crying out, **“Crucify Him!”**

And when we **do choose wrongly**, are we like Judas, or are we like Peter?
When we suffer on our own cross, do we curse like the bad thief, or ask God for help?
Do we **give up** or do we **get to** Reconciliation and choose to follow Christ again?

Today, if we choose to “go with the flow” **simply because** it's politically correct, or because we don't want to be judged as **“intolerant,”** how **will we ever** have the courage to choose “to go against the flow” when our livelihood, our health or our freedom will be at stake?

The early Christians gave their life before they would offer incense to the emperor's statue. Today, some Christians **approve** the sacrifice the lives of the unborn rather than be called unenlightened.

How will we choose on th Good Friday of the Mystical Body, the Church?

From today, until Easter, you can see that all the tabernacles of the world are **empty**, and all the altars are **bare**.

- It is a reminder of the sacrifice of our Lord, of the **emptiness** that would have been in each of our hearts had Jesus abandoned us in our sin.
- But he **didn't** abandon us.

And so, when we receive him today in Holy Communion,

- let's make our **hearts** into his tabernacles,
- let's make our **hearts** into his altars,
- let's make our **hearts** into his thrones,

SO that between now and Easter Jesus has a place to stay on earth, and we become living billboards of the truth that **God wants us to come to him just as we are**.