

A Coffee with Alessio



The Ninth Station: Jesus falls the third time

As we continue our meditation on the "Way of the Cross" this week with the ninth station where Jesus falls for the third time, I am mindful of all that has been going on in the world recently with the coronavirus and how so many people have unfortunately caught the virus and some sadly have died. As a world community we suffer the effects of this virus with a number of places placed on a "travel ban" list. That list is growing each day. We also find ourselves in the predicament of health authorities following up on people who have gathered at various public events. Then of course the aisles in the shopping centres are looking a lot like "Old Mother Hubbard's bare cupboard", with people stockpiling. Why do I mention all of this? Nothing I've written above could possibly hold a candle to the extensive media coverage of this virus in all the possible platforms. However, as we heard at the beginning of the Stations of the Cross Christ spoke:

"Therefore my way of the cross
two thousand years ago
and your "way" now
are also one."

Yes, so this virus is our world cross to bear in 2020 (and Christ walks with us)- and not only what I mentioned above, but also the ongoing effect it will have on the economy, especially as cities continue to go into quarantine and in effect lock down.

In the ninth station we hear how Christ falls for the third time - completely drained of his strength. He says:

"Completely drained of strength
I lie, collapsed, upon the cobblestones.
My body cannot move.
No blows, no kicks, can rouse it up."

As I read Christ's words, I am mindful of those people who are in hospital with the virus and no one can go to see them. We must pray for those people that they have the courage to continue on and for the doctors looking after those patients.

The people finish their reply to this station by saying:

"Lord, never let me feel
that any sin of mine
is greater than your love.
No matter what my past has been
I can begin anew."

Yes, the Lord has given us the gift of another day, to start afresh and renew our commitment to follow Him. We can't dwell on the past. If we have trespassed against someone, we must seek forgiveness and continue to build the Lord's Kingdom here on earth. Let's use our time wisely doing good for the Lord and others.

The verse of the hymn "At the Cross her station keeping" that follows the ninth station is as follows:

"Make me feel as you have felt:
make my soul to glow and melt
with the love of Christ, my Lord."

This Sunday is Laetare Sunday- the Fourth Sunday of Lent. This Sunday marks the half-way point of our Lenten journey, so we are given a "day-off" from our Lenten penance because the day of the Lord's Resurrection is drawing near. The penitential violet vestments give way to the rejoicing rose vestments. Public Masses have been suspended for the time being, so you may like to tune in to one of the Masses that are being live streamed and/or recorded for future download.

As for a coffee and cake this weekend, I think a berry muffin and flat white at Muffin Break will be a good way to celebrate the liturgy this Sunday and mark the half-way point of Lent 2020.

So, as we continue our Lenten journey, let us rejoice in the blessings the Lord has bestowed upon us. Till next week - enjoy your coffee and cake!

Alessio Loiacono
Music Field Officer

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