

A Coffee with Alessio



AMDG

The Twelfth Station: Jesus Dies on the Cross (Part 1)

Just before I begin this week's column, there are two introductory comments I would like to make. Firstly, I normally don't split each week's column into two parts – but for this week I am going to make an exception. This week I will focus on what Christ speaks in this Station. Secondly, I mentioned in last week's column that this series on the Stations of the Cross is a bit like the new series of "Death in Paradise." I will expand on that topic next week.

At the beginning of the Twelfth Station Christ speaks:

"The cross has become my pulpit now-
"Forgive them, Father" ...
"You will be with me in Paradise" ...
"There is your mother... There... your son" ...
"I thirst" ...
"It is complete."

These phrases which we hear from Jesus while He is dying on the Cross, are five of what have become known as His Seven Last Words. The other two are: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" and "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Many composers have set these phrases to beautiful music including to the present day. Jacques Berthier from the monastery in Taize has set them to music – very easy music that people can sing to.

The one line I would like to focus on today is the first line Christ speaks: "The cross has become my pulpit now."

In my column two weeks ago I suggested we take a risk and invite someone to Mass, and not to leave it there, but to have a coffee with them afterwards. I would like to flesh that idea out some more today. There are so many people that we come across

who are in need of support in one way or another. For some of them we will be able to help them with their problems, for others we are just a listening ear (hence the coffee). I think we should add those people to our prayer list. Prayer transcends all time and knows no boundaries. We may not always receive the answer that we wish to our prayers, nor receive it immediately. However, prayer is the key that unlocks all doors. Christ showed us that when He prayed for his executioners on the cross and for the good thief, He unlocked the doors of paradise. We need to pray also for our families and friends especially those people who run the risk of losing their way – that God keep them on the straight and narrow.

For those people who have stopped going to Church or who have never been, we may be the only encounter with Christ that they have – and our lives and the way we live them, may be the only homily people hear (and see) throughout the week. Yes, we hear the homily after the Scripture readings which is supposed to tell us about the main characters in the readings, explain the readings for us or what I like to call “break open the Word”, and tell us how we can apply those readings to our life in the coming week. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if each of us could convert someone to the Catholic faith or bring someone back to Church. Christ said “the Cross becomes a pulpit for Him now”, so too it is with us, our lives are a pulpit and hopefully our participation in the Eucharist, strengthened by God’s Word and nourished by the Body and Blood of His Son, Jesus, who died on the Cross for you and for me, we can share the Good News with those we meet and with the wider community. This year I would like to convert someone and/or bring someone back to the faith. That is definitely a challenge. I may find out if I have done it and I may not. What I do know is that God works in mysterious ways, but He asks us to proclaim His Gospel in the world. I really do hope I can win one of God’s children over and turn them back to Him.

So, just as Jesus promises paradise to the good thief, may we be a shoulder for people to lean on in this coming week. Just as he gave Mary to Saint John and Saint John to Mary, so too, He gives Mary to us to be our Mother. Mary knows only too well the pain and sorrows that can confront us. The Servite Friars in their Constitution have a wonderful phrase that reads: “Mary stands at the foot of those countless crosses in which our brothers and sisters are still being crucified today”. Our listening ear, our pastoral care, our invitation for someone to join at Mass, our coffees with people are all ways in which we like Mary stand with people at the foot of their cross.

Two other comments before I wrap up this week’s column. Since pulpit and homily have been the key themes in this week’s column, I thought I would make mention of the upcoming State election here in Western Australia. Next week, voters will head to the polls to decide who should form the next government here of the 41st Parliament. Political parties for the last few weeks have been giving their homilies at their pulpits of election campaign launches, campaign meetings and explanations

about policies. There are also the leaders' debates. As we head to the polls, the question we need to ask ourselves is: will the person I am going to vote for be a model of the Gospel? Unfortunately, these days election campaigns so often focus on what someone else is doing or not doing, instead of a particular party explaining what their platform will be.

It was remiss of me a few weeks ago not to mention that a Presentation Sister who has spent most of her life in the Geraldton diocese – Sr Evangelista – recently celebrated her 100th birthday and also eighty years of Religious Profession. Congratulations to you Sister on the wonderful work you have done and for the faithful witness your life has been to Christ and His Gospel. May God's blessings be with you!

As for a coffee this week, a latte and a hot cross bun from Dome or Lawleys would be a good way to go. If you are having a coffee with someone give thanks to God for the blessing that person is (or those people are) in your life. The café is your pulpit where the exchange of conversation and friendship becomes a living homily to enrich your week. If you are having a coffee on your own, likewise the café is your pulpit also. You can also use that time of silence to give thanks to God for the many wonderful blessings you have received.

Till next week - enjoy your coffee and cake!

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To be continued...