

A Coffee with Alessio



AMDG

The Thirteenth Station: Jesus is taken down from the Cross

As I have been thinking what I should write about in this week's column there are several thoughts running through my mind. Firstly, how our health can change in an instant and that we should take nothing for granted. Each day when we rise our first prayer should be thank you Lord for the gift of this day and thank you for the use of my body and its senses.

Secondly, our brothers and sisters in New South Wales have undergone a very devastating and traumatic experience with floods this week. We must pray for them and support them as well.

Thirdly, this past Tuesday marked one year since we went into lockdown with everything closing, only take away service available at cafes and restaurants. Places of worship were closed too and so Holy Week was a very low-key affair. Another reminder we should take nothing for granted.

Fourthly, yesterday was the feast of the Annunciation – when Mary heard and responded “Yes” to being the mother of Jesus. Nine months to Christmas. More about that next week.

This week we resume our series on the Stations of the Cross. This week's column will be the last episode in that series till next year. In next week's column I am going to give a reflection on Holy Week.

You will recall in the previous column that Jesus died on the Cross. In this week's station he is taken down from the Cross. Christ speaks:

The sacrifice is done.
Yes, my Mass is complete;
but not my mother's
and not yours, my other self.

My mother must cradle in here arms the lifeless body of the son she bore.

You, too, must part from those you love,
and grief will come to you."

Oh yes, we have learned through our reflection on the Stations of the Cross this Lent how suffering and grief are part and parcel of our lives and are part of being a disciple of Christ. That could lead us to thinking that being a follower of Christ is all about doom and gloom. On the contrary. It is about a passionate love affair with a God who loves us so much that He became one of us and like us in all things except sin. On the Cross, when Jesus died, he took on the sins of all humanity, past, present and future, and it is those sins that nailed Him to the Cross on Calvary. God loves you and me. In those moments when everything seems to be going pear-shaped for you, offer those times of suffering up with the nails of Jesus on the Cross.

Our response to Christ is:

I beg you, Lord,
Help me accept the partings that must come -...
And most of all, my dear ones
When you shall call them to yourself."

And if by one word
I might restore their lives against your will,
I would not speak."

There's an interesting line – I would not speak. We have to accept God's will and if speaking would mean that we are not accepting God's will, we shouldn't speak.

The verse of the hymn from "At the Cross" that follows this Station is:

"By the Cross with you to stay,
there with you to weep and pray,
is all I ask of you to give."

Every year on Good Friday when I am at the Stations of the Cross and I hear and pray that response I get a chill down my spine and dry tear or two. I can't help but think of my mum, grandparents and other family and friends who have before us marked with the sign of faith. Yes., indeed, I do miss those people, and when friends move on that is always a shame. These partings of people are a reminder to us that we cannot exist in isolation. We are members of a faith community and just as we worship as a community we must pray for each other and together, and support each other as well. There is nothing like a huge family gathering (in Italian style with everyone

shouting at the top of their voices) or a gathering with friends. We need each other and we must support each other.

When the Lord does call people to Himself, let us give thanks for the blessing those people were to us and pray for their eternal rest:

“Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord
and let perpetual light shine upon them,
may they rest in peace. Amen.”

As for a coffee this week, a flat white at Jamaica Blue seems appropriate with a serving of fruit toast. Something very simple during the somber days of Holy Week.

Next week’s column will be published on Monday since it will be a reflection on Holy Week.

Till then, enjoy your coffee!

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