

A Coffee with Alessio



AMDG

The Eleventh Station: Jesus is Crucified

As I have been doing for the last two Lenten periods, I am going to resume my series on the Stations of the Cross, using the prayers laid out in "Everyone's Way of the Cross" by Clarence Enzler. Before I go onto this week's Station: "Jesus is Crucified", I thought I would just recap the last two series on the Stations of the Cross, before we launch into series three. A bit like recapping what happened in the previous series of "Death in Paradise" - more about that in future columns - make sure you stay tuned!

In the lead up to Jesus' Crucifixion, we have heard about His Condemnation, taking up His Cross, falling three times, being helped by Simon Peter, meeting his Mother, Mary along the way and Veronica helping Jesus also. Not a very pleasant experience at all - instead, a rather painful one - physically, mentally and emotionally. Jesus knows only too well our pains and suffering. For some people their crosses are huge and for others they are minor. Some people would like to swap their crosses for someone else's, but we must remember that part of Christian discipleship is taking up our Cross and following Jesus. Just as He was nailed to the Cross to redeem us from sin, so too will we be nailed to ours. Now, I'm not making the Cross or suffering out to be a picnic - not all. It is hard, but we must nail our pain and suffering with Jesus' and offer it up for someone in need. Jesus will help us carry our Cross.

So, back to this week's Station - Jesus is Crucified.

Christ speaks:

"Can you imagine what a crucifixion is?"

They press the nail until it stabs my flesh.
With one heavy hammer smash,
they drive it through -
and pain

bursts like a bomb of fire in my brain.”

That description given there seems rather graphic – but it explains Jesus’ Crucifixion for what it is – full of pain! Yes, Jesus loved us all so much that He laid down His life for us. He could have chosen not to be crucified – but that would have made his public ministry null and void. Mary, could have said no to God when He asked her through the Angel Gabriel to be mother of Jesus. She instead said yes. We too, must say yes to Jesus.

Crucifixion was a punishment reserved for the most severe of criminals – one that Jesus did not deserve. It is interesting to note that on Palm Sunday everyone was singing Hosanna as He rode on a donkey into Jerusalem and six days later on Good Friday everything changed. We must not be like those people in Jerusalem, but rather do our best to be faithful to Jesus even when it is inconvenient.

In the Eleventh Station the people make their reply to Jesus:

“My God,
I look at you and think:
Is my soul worth this much?”

Yes, indeed in God’s eyes no one is worth more or less than the next person. We are all equal and all heirs of his Kingdom in heaven. So, we are worth so much that Jesus would die for us. We are called each day to follow Jesus, to serve Him and our neighbour. The three prongs of Lent which I mentioned in last week’s column: prayer, fasting and almsgiving, are concrete and tangible ways in which we can serve God and neighbour. This week, let us offer up our trials and tribulations with the nails that went through Jesus hands and feet on the Cross, and pray:

“Lord, I offer to you this Cross which you have asked me to bear. It is not easy, and it causes me much suffering. Since you died for love of all on the Cross, I bear it and you ask you to bear it with me.”

The concluding part of the people’s reply to this Station reinforces our works of prayer, fasting and almsgiving during Lent:

We conclude:

“O blessed cross that lets me be –
with You –
a co-redeemer of humanity.”

As we bear our crosses in life we are like Jesus nailed to the Cross. When we help others bear theirs we are like Simon Peter and Veronica. We may not always be able to eliminate people’s suffering, but we can make it a bit easier and their day can be

brightened our presence, our conversation and our friendship. That's why I think a coffee with someone (and I'll have a cake outside Lent), is such a practical way of showing pastoral care and living the Gospel. Getting someone out of home or their workplace or whatever situation they are in that causes them grief, affords them the opportunity to honest, shed tears and tell you what's on their mind. Lent is a good time for that. Fresh air does wonders for people!

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

"Let me share with you his pain,
who for all my sins was slain,
who for me in torments died."

As for a coffee this week, a latte and a slice of banana bread seems to be in keeping with the simplicity of this Lenten Season. 160 in the Murray Street Mall does a delicious banana bread and a good coffee as well. There you have the option of sitting indoors out outdoors (with sail cloths above). First thing in the morning when the breeze is blowing a wonderful time to be there.

Till next week - enjoy your coffee and cake!

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