

Certainly a topic of conversation during this season of Lent has been the cooler weather in these early days of Spring. At a time when we want to see daffodils and tulips peeking their flowery heads above ground and feel warm spring breezes, we get a dose of blustery winds that chills everything. Isobel Thrilling's poem, "Before Easter" seems rather appropriate on this Good Friday.

"Spring/yet frost still builds/dead palaces./We hear the crack from icicles of bone/snow crowns/have snapped the throats/of daffodils/the ice queen walks in/her brittle dress/no rose blood in the stem/no cumulus/perfume in the trees/each day/is a coffin of glass./the sun is turned to crystal/it is our alchemy of winter/inner cold/Christ sleeps behind the quickened stone."

Yes, today is Good Friday, the day that Christ died and was placed in the stone tomb. This is the only day in the Church calendar when mass is not celebrated. The communion we share today was consecrated last night at the Mass of the Lord's Supper. Today we focus on the cross; the one that bore the Body of our Lord and those that we are destined to carry in our life here on earth. There is a tie between these two. What is important for us to remember is that no matter how heavy or cumbersome our cross may be in this life we must always remember that Jesus bore his cross, his terrible, painful, cross before us. The same teacher who last night instructed us to go and wash the feet of our brothers and sisters is now again giving us a life lesson. We are to bear our crosses with dignity and courage and have faith in the One who bore his cross before us.

There is a story about Mother Teresa that says that one day Mother was observing a group of sisters as they left the convent on the way to their apostolic work. One sister in particular looked sad and gloomy. Mother Teresa stopped her and told her that the problem was that she was carrying her cross ahead of Christ. We must not lead but follow. Let Christ and his cross lead the way.

The temptation for many of us is that we want Easter without Good Friday. Consider the words of this poem as we reflect on Christ leading the way with his cross:

He asked for strength that he might achieve. He was made weak that he might obey. He asked for power that he might do great things. He was given pain that he might do better things. He asked for wealth that he might be in comfort. He was made poor that he might live in sympathy. He asked for success that he might have the praise of others. He was given failure that he might feel the need of God. He asked for all things that he might enjoy life. He was given life that he might enjoy all things. He received nothing that he asked for...and yet all that he hoped for.

Our cross in this life makes us one with Christ. We who are marked with the Cross of Christ by Baptism dare to call this Friday “good” because we know it is not the end of the story. We bear our crosses with hope knowing that Christ is on this journey with us, leading the way.

Vincent Holme captured it best in his work entitled, “Good Friday”

“Gall is the taste of life when we/Who live must bear our  
Calvary/On this day our Master died/Christ, the Lord, the  
Crucified./Upon the cross in agony/He shed his blood for  
love of me./In every street, on every hill/The Heart that  
stopped is beating still.”