

Good Friday 2016: Is 52:13 – 53:12; Ps. 31; Heb 4: 14 – 16; 5: 7 – 9; Jn 18: 1 – 19: 42

**“Christ Crucified as the Font of God’s Mercy”**

As we pray before each of the Stations of the Cross, “*We adore you O Christ, and we praise You, because by your holy Cross and Resurrection you have redeemed the world.*” Jesus by embracing His fearful Passion and Death will triumph over sin, death, and satan and all the powers of evil, both in the supernatural sense and in the earthly sense. We are called to share in that Victory, which we will celebrate on Easter.

1. **Why the Cross?** To give us hope in the midst of our sufferings, spiritual and earthly- whatever their cause. The only way we ultimately learn how to love in a self-giving way and to be obedient like Jesus is through the mystery of the Cross, the suffering we endure and embrace in union with Christ Crucified, as we hear about today in the Second reading from the letter to the Hebrews. Are we willing to share in the redemptive mission of Christ? To offer our lives as a self-gift to God for the salvation of others (see Romans 12:1-2). Our greatest glory in this life, which we will only see fully in eternity, is our participation in the redemptive mystery of Christ by each day uniting our sufferings with Him in love.
2. **Lent has been a call to all of us to die with Christ:** *to sin, to falsehood, to selfishness, to misplaced priorities,* in order to rise with Him, to be re-born to a life of virtue, goodness, truth and integrity in order to live the new life of holiness, in the power of the Holy Spirit, which Christ merited for us by dying willingly on the Cross for our sins. We are called now to witness to Jesus, to His saving message of Truth in every aspect of our lives: *family, work, school, with our friends and neighbors,* to stand up for Jesus and our Catholic Faith. As Jesus puts it so powerfully in the account of the Passion in Gospel of John which we heard today, “*I have come into the world to testify to the Truth and everyone who belongs to the Truth listens to my voice.*” God is truth and His Catholic Church teaches the saving message of Truth that will set us free and keep us on the path to eternal life. Let’s not be like the proud, cynical, sarcastic, Pontus Pilate who in response to Jesus’s declaration says, “*What is truth?*” So many in our world today have the same skeptical response to Jesus and the Catholic faith and to the very

notion of objective truth- e.g., that every person just makes it up as they go in relation to morality and the spiritual life – we believe otherwise – that God has shown us the path and we need to conform our lives to it. How deeply we need to entrust ourselves and our whole world to the Mercy on God, exemplified by Jesus today in His death in our place. As we pray in the Divine Mercy Chaplet, “*For the sake of His Sorrowful Passion have Mercy on us and on the whole world.*”

- 3. Remember the Blood and Water that flows from the side of Jesus on the Cross is the symbol of God’s mercy.** The clear message should be that Jesus never rejects those who in sorrow turn to Him repenting of their sins. And He draws close to His loving heart all those who have embraced Him in this life and fills their hearts with His peace which the world cannot take away. *The Blood and Water which flow from His Sacred Heart is also the symbolic source of the Sacramental Life of the Church, with the water in a special way symbolizing Baptism and the Blood the Holy Eucharist.* As a Church we begin today **the Divine Mercy Novena**, which we will pray at the conclusion of this Celebration of the Passion for those of you who can stay along with the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. This powerful Novena, given to us by Jesus through St. Faustina, reminds us that we need to bring our prayers, our worries, our needs, our crosses to the font of eternal life - the pierced Heart of Jesus, and He will fill us with His tender love and peace that He won for us some 2000 years ago on Mt. Calvary. May we always do this in company with Our Blessed Mother Mary to fulfill the Command of Jesus in this regard, for Jesus entrusted the human race to Mary on the Cross when He said, “*Woman behold your Son.*” And may we respond in kind to Mary, as Jesus entrusted her to St. John the Evangelist who represented all human beings when Jesus said to him, “*Behold your Mother.*” *And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.* Let’s invite Mary into our homes, into our hearts, so she can teach us how to unite ourselves more fully with her Divine Son Jesus, so He can teach us how to fully live and share the saving Truth of our Catholic faith with others, to wounded humanity during this Year of Mercy, and ultimately lead all of us in the Spirit to our Heavenly Home. God bless you.