

A Good Friday Homily – April 22, 2011

How often we think of the hymn “Were You There?” when we make our way through Lent and up to this celebration of the Lord’s death on the cross. Yes, we are here. And we don’t make this journey by ourselves. We make it with Jesus, the one who suffered betrayals, rejections, and the denials of those close to Him.

We make this journey as we prayerfully ask: “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?”

Yes, we are there. Every time another person suffers, Jesus suffers.

And we are there to be Christ for those whose lives and bodies are broken.

We are there to let our life-blood circulate with the ability to empower our love to mend wounds.

We are there to lovingly receive Christ as He is taken down from the cross.

We are there to marvel at the love He has for us, for even while we are still sinners He gives His life for us.

If we look at the cross in the light of its historical setting we see what *appears* to be a lack of power, and we see what *appears* to be defeat. For in the minds of first century Jews and non-Jews alike, crucifixion meant only one thing: utter, total, complete failure. To be crucified was to be rejected by God and by humans in utter defeat.

And yet, as the hymn so delicately asks us: Were you there?

Yes, we are here. We have come to celebrate the victory of the cross and the power of Christ crucified.

We have come to renew our faith in a Lord who stops at nothing to show His love for us.

We have come to thank Him for enabling us to be Christ for those in need.

We have come to ask for His grace to enable us to love our enemies, to triumph over suffering, to help us look beyond what *appears* to be a lack of power and utter defeat.

We have come because we know He is true to His promises and we trust that He will raise us up to new life.