

1. From Fr. Yake's Desk - A Reflection on the Paschal Mystery

Instalment #2

In the first part of this reflection on the Paschal Mystery we saw that, “the challenge of Christianity is not to love God as we can, but to love God and neighbour to the same extent as Christ-crucified; in every action and decision of our lives to abide by the rule of obedience....” We read, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (John 14: 15) For sinners whose desires and “inordinate attachments,” as St. Ignatius Loyola called sinners’ attraction to empty values, baptismal faith demands a death to this lower self in order to achieve one’s best self. We read, “In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith – being more precious than gold that though perishable, is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.” (1 Peter 1: 6-7) Redemptive suffering is meaningful because it has a most positive objective, that of living free from enslaving addictions in this life and then of attaining eternal life. Note the connection between faith and suffering in this Easter message from the Prelate of Opus Dei, <https://youtu.be/yNdcM3Lo0Q> as he brings consoling words at this time of Covid-19. Quoting St. Josemaria, “Our joy has its roots in the shape of a cross,” he teaches that faith gives suffering its full meaning.

In his book that caught the attention of St. Pope Paul VI, *Introduction to Christianity*, theologian Josef Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) employed a psychological truth that persons come to themselves, feeling whole and fulfilled, when they are with the ‘other;’ a way of alluding to the love-experience. He noted that regardless of how generous persons are they will always hold something back for themselves. On the cross Jesus did not keep anything for himself but he surrendered himself 100% to the absolute Other, to God, in complete trust. Ratzinger referred to this singular act of love as ‘crossing the Rubicon,’ an expression of love that is so unique that it stands alone in the history of human love, and because Jesus gave all to God, psychologically he has come to himself as the only authentic human being. For Jesus his love of God and neighbour is exemplary and he challenges his disciples to follow him; he expects the baptised to give 100%. Ratzinger thus concludes that the future of humanity hangs on the cross, that is, the greatest possibility of human beings is to risk all in order to achieve the full potential of their humanity and at the same time to reach the supreme possibility of their humanness, to be in love with God, for one can only know God by becoming what God is, and that is *agape*, love. (1 John 4: 8)

In order to reveal the resurrection, logically, Jesus had to die but he had first preached that in him was life and his miracles and encounters with individuals all became experiences of the life to be accessed through him. Like Moses, (Deuteronomy 30: 15-20) Jesus tried to awaken his listeners to the fact that they had an eternal destiny that was one of two *fundamental options*, life or death.

In my book, *Talking to Teens About the Mass*, in the talk entitled, ‘Why Do I Need to God to Mass?’ I tried to describe how we may access the life that Christ-crucified gave us and how we may engage the Cross at Holy Mass. The Cross also resolved Jesus’ struggle to communicate the infinite love, generosity, and mercy of the

Father. His dilemma resided in the fact that his listeners were unable to grasp this teaching.

“The focus of the Mass as a representation of Jesus’ cross captures and makes effective Jesus’ saving message: love God and hate sin. By his death he is able to express both. The crucifix dramatically communicates the extent to which one is to love and obey God; above all things, including one’s existence. Secondly, when we look upon Christ-crucified we can understand the horror of sin that means the violent destruction of innocent life. Jesus accepts his torture to death without resistance or retaliation and by absorbing death it has nowhere to go. Jesus shows us what sin really is and how to defeat it.

Theologian Bernard Lonergan, SJ taught how our redemption was a conversion, intellectually and affectively, to Jesus who took our place and punishment to reveal, “love God, hate sin.” Philosopher Paul Ricoeur said of conversion that is not always so much a *conversion of the will* as an *expansion of the imagination* and Lonergan’s treatment of salvation evokes both. If we could appreciate intelligently what Jesus suffered for us out of love (Jn. 15: 13) there is possible a transformation in the human structures of knowing: experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding, so that we might be moved to love Jesus in return. A short story to illustrate Lonergan’s reasoning:

Pietro was a famous painter who was also a gifted sculptor. On painting a masterpiece that created great emotion and profundity in him he immediately sought to share the experience with his friend, Maria, an artist adept at sculpture, so that she could partake in the extraordinary movement created by this piece of art. However, Maria could not see in Pietro’s painting the profound depth and lofty vision of life that he had so well brought into existence. He reasoned that this was probably because Maria could not appreciate the art form of the masterpiece. To communicate the inspiration of the painting Pietro decided that he would attempt a sculpture that would bear the same emotional impact as his painting so that, being in her medium, Maria could understand it. Both were delighted as the beauty captured and revealed in Pietro’s art charmed Maria. She too was deeply moved and changed through being stimulated by Pietro’s sculpture.

This story gives us some idea about the problem that Jesus faced and how he resolved it. Through his miracles and sermons people still failed to comprehend his love for God and humanity and his hatred for sin. By the cross Jesus sculpted himself into his message, love God and hate sin, as a piece of art to confront humanity with the truth and to show the way to God. Seeing the goodness and love in Christ-crucified sinners may fearlessly come to him and by connecting to him be transformed, healed of sin, and in relationship with God. The Mass is the stage upon which this drama is played out. The Mass makes present and effective Jesus’ love of God and hatred for sin that is the power to save sinners.

The Mass celebrates the death of Jesus so that we, by imitating the same self-surrender as Jesus, might join him in glory. Simply receiving Christ in the bread and wine does not magically make us holy but as Christ lets his glory imbue them, we need to let them transform our lives. Our concern is that we emulate Jesus’ self-gift, the Eucharistic symbols are not objects but actions for us to imitate. The Eucharist is not bread and wine but the *breaking* of the bread and the *sharing* of the cup; the action of giving self up to await a higher life. We grow in holiness by being at prayer with Jesus.” (p. 138 – 139)

2. Please note the item in the Catholic Register that Canada and the United States will be consecrated to Mary on May 1 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We read in part from Canadian Catholic News, Apr. 23, 2020:

“The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops Thursday invited Canadian bishops, in solidarity with a number of bishops conferences around the world, consecrate their individual dioceses and eparchies to Mary, Mother of the Church, on Friday, May 1, (12pm PDT or 3pm EDT) seeking her maternal protection during the coronavirus pandemic.

Every year, the Church seeks the special intercession of the Mother of God during the month of May. This year, we seek the assistance of Our Lady all the more earnestly as we face together the effects of the global pandemic,” (Archbishop Gomez, president of the U.S. Catholic bishops’ conference) said in his letter.

Canada was last consecrated to Mary on July 2, 2017, the 150th anniversary of Confederation. In Vancouver, hundreds of Catholics gathered at Holy Rosary Cathedral as Archbishop J. Michael Miller joined bishops across the country in consecrating Canada to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

For the 2017 Canadian consecration, the CCCB developed a resource that can be [found here](#) and which the bishops suggested could be useful in developing materials for this year’s event.

The title “Mary, Mother of the Church” was given to the Blessed Mother by Pope St. Paul VI at the Second Vatican Council, and a memorial under the title was added to the Church’s liturgical calendar in 2018.

Pope Francis declared that the Monday after Pentecost should be celebrated as the memorial of “Mary, Mother of the Church.” Cardinal Robert Sarah, head of the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship, said that the addition of the memorial aimed to encourage growth in “genuine Marian piety.”

Celebrating the memorial in 2018, Archbishop Gomez said that “when Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, Mary became the maternal heart of his Church.”

More information will follow next week. In preparation for this prayerful event Bishop Kirkpatrick sends the following link:

[https://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/Consecration_of_Canada -
QA_resource_for_adults_-_EN.pdf](https://www.cccb.ca/site/images/stories/pdf/Consecration_of_Canada_-_QA_resource_for_adults_-_EN.pdf)

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

In this time of pandemic, Pope Francis asks for our prayer to Mary for all the sick people around us... and which might be us.

O Mary,

You always shine on our path as a sign of salvation and hope.

We trust you, Queen of the Sick, you, whose faith was strong as you shared Jesus' pain at the foot of the cross.

You, *Salvation of the People*... you know what we need, and we are sure that you will grant our requests, just as you brought back joy and celebration at the Cana wedding feast in Galilee, after a moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of the Divine Love, to obey the will of the Father and to do what Jesus tells us, He who took upon Himself our sufferings and was burdened with our sorrows to carry us through the cross to the joy of the resurrection.

Amen!

3. Deceased this week

- Gertrude Riley, sister-in-law of Deacon Art Riley.

- Mary Matthews, sister of Archbishop Dunn.

- Rev. Angus Joseph MacLeod died on Thursday, April 23, 2020, at his residence in Harbourstone Enhanced Care, Sydney, Nova Scotia.

Father Angus MacLeod would have been 94 years of age next Tuesday (April 28, 1926).

Father Angus was born in Dunvegan, Inverness County and was ordained on June 7, 1952 by Most. Rev. John R. MacDonald. Father MacLeod's priestly ministry included a life of appointments both parish and diocesan. His first appointment was as an assistant at Immaculate Conception, Sydney Mines in 1952; was appointed Diocesan Chancellor in 1956; then Diocesan Director of the Family Life Bureau, Nazareth House, Sydney; Parish Priest / Pastor of St. Mary's, Big Pond, St. James, Gardiner Mines; St. Anthony Daniel, Sydney, St. Ninian Cathedral, St. Anthony Parish, Glace Bay; St. Gregory, New Glasgow. Father Angus was appointed Dean of the Sydney Deanery and then Dean of the Antigonish Deanery and was a member of the Council of Priests. His last parish appointment before retirement was Our Lady of Fatima, Sydney River. Father Angus retired in June 1994, worked in hospital Chaplaincy in Toronto and returned to Cape Breton in 1997.

