

Palm Sunday “The Medicine of the Cross”

Fr. Frank Schuster

The Passion preaches itself doesn't? Because of this, my homily will be very brief. However, I wish to begin by saying how wonderful it is to be back with you. I am grateful for your prayers while I was in the hospital and on the mend from appendicitis. I am not quite yet at full strength but I think once I am off the medications I am supposed to finish I'll be back to 100%. I only mention this because the idea of “medicine” is a good metaphor for this weekend and for Holy Week. I cannot pronounce the medications they gave me so I'll just refer to them by where I think they are manufactured. I call the first one Hanford and the second one Fukushima. They are pretty strong meds but I think we can all be grateful to live in a time when infections like this can be cured with the proper medicine. Being back with all of you this weekend is the best medicine I could ask for. That is the honest truth!

This weekend marks the beginning of Holy Week. We are once again making our pilgrimage with Jesus to the cross and his resurrection. And Passion Sunday begins this pilgrimage with setting our eyes on the cross. God utilizes the cross in a remarkable way to heal the human race from the poison of our sins. That is some very strong medicine. Every year, I think it is good to sit down with the Passion and ask ourselves “who are we in this story”? I think we can all find ourselves identifying with someone in this story if we take the time to prayerfully consider, who are we in the story this year? On the other hand, we can also profit by gazing on the cross this week and asking ourselves, how can that instrument of torture and death that we place on our walls and in our worship spaces be medicine for me right now?

You know, when I finally had the sense of getting to the Urgent Care and from there ambulated to the emergency room, God and I had a good conversation. I wasn't angry. I wasn't sad. My prayer was, “God couldn't this have waited until after our capital campaign?” Actually, I was more worried about who was going to cover for me that weekend. God responded patiently with a smile and a paraphrase of Psalm 139, “Frank, you are wonderfully made...as a mortal. This is what mortality is.” And then in my mind's eye I saw the cross and God's only son. Jesus experienced the worst aspects of our mortality for the sake of our salvation. What strange medicine and how very strong.

This Holy Week, God gives us the medicine of the cross. What does this mean for you this Holy Week? The invitation is to consider the struggles you are dealing with right now and all the worries that you are faced with. We all have them because we are all wonderfully made as mortals. Can we enter this Holy

Week and embrace this time as an opportunity to contemplate the medicine of the cross and what that means for us, the healing properties and the side effects with regard to how we live our lives? I invite you to join us for the Holy Triduum this week, beginning with Holy Thursday 7PM, followed by Good Friday at 7 PM and Easter Vigil at 9 PM. Holy Week is medicine my friends. It is medicine. Just as the body needs medicine at times, so does the soul. This week we are called to take up our crosses and follow in Jesus' footsteps so to receive the healing Jesus wants to give us in the glory of his resurrection.