

Good Friday “I Thirst”

Fr. Frank Schuster

My friends, two words that stand out to me this year in the Passion according to Saint John are the words, “I thirst”. Jesus is the font for life giving water and he thirsts for you and thirsts for our conversion. Instead of expounding on these two words further myself, I think it best to allow Mother Teresa to talk to us instead. You see, the words from Jesus “I thirst” were profoundly important to her; so much so that every chapel built for the Missionaries of Charity have these words on display. What follows are Mother Teresa’s own words to her community when she was 82. Maybe it is also a letter from her to you tonight. She writes,

“My Dearest Children—Sisters, Brothers, and Fathers,

This letter being very personal, I wanted to write in my own hand—by there are so many things to say. Even if not in Mother’s hand, still it comes from Mother’s heart. Jesus wants me to tell you again, especially in this Holy Week, how much love He has for each one of you—beyond all you can imagine. I worry some of you still have not really met Jesus—one to one—you and Jesus alone. We may spend time in chapel—but have you seen with the eyes of your soul how He looks at you with love? Do you really know the living Jesus—not from books but from being with Him in your heart? Have you heard the loving words He speaks to you? Ask for the grace, He is longing to give it. Until you can hear Jesus in the silence of your own heart, you will not be able to hear Him saying ‘I thirst’ in the hearts of the poor. Never give up this daily intimate contact with Jesus as the real living person—not just the idea. How can we last even one day without hearing Jesus say ‘I love you’—impossible.

Our soul needs that as much as the body needs to breathe the air. If not, prayer is dead—meditation-only thinking. Jesus wants you each to hear Him—speaking in the silence of your heart. Be careful of all that can block that personal contact with the living Jesus. The devil may try to use the hurts of life, and sometimes our own mistakes—to make you feel it is impossible that Jesus really loves you, is really cleaving to you. This is a danger for all of us. And so sad, because it is completely opposite of what Jesus is really wanting, waiting to tell you. Not only that He loves you, but even more—He longs for you. He misses you when you don’t come close.

He thirsts for you. He loves you always, even when you don’t feel worthy. When not accepted by others, even by yourself sometimes—He is the one who always accepts you. My children, you don’t have to be different for Jesus to love you.

Only believe—You are precious to Him. Bring all you are suffering to His feet—only open your heart to be loved by Him as you are. He will do the rest. You all know in your mind that Jesus loves you—but in this letter Mother wants to touch your heart instead. Jesus wants to stir up our hearts, so not to lose our early love, especially in the future after Mother leaves you. That is why I ask you to read this letter before the Blessed Sacrament, the same place it was written, so Jesus himself can speak to you each one.”

The letter continues, however I believe what we just heard captures perfectly what we are doing tonight. In a few minutes, we will be coming forward to the feet of Jesus, so to venerate his cross. When you come forward this year, bring with you everything that you are, and hear Jesus' words just for you. I thirst.