

Twenty Ninth Sunday In Ordinary Time

My beloved brothers and sisters, in the Gospel for today, the Apostles John and James are seeking the glory of ruling alongside of Jesus, because they think that He is on the way to Jerusalem to claim the Throne of David. They are seeking power and prestige. What Jesus shows them, is not the way of earthly glory, secular success, but the way of self-denial, the way of the Suffering Servant we heard in the first reading, and the way of terrible self-sacrifice on the cross! Jesus teaches us that the way to true glory, is the degree we give ourselves to others. This is the meaning of the questions of Jesus: “can you drink the cup I must drink, or the baptism with which I am to be baptized?”

The Suffering Servant in Isaiah, is the prophecy that the Messiah, will not be a earthly King of Glory, but a sacrificial lamb, who takes upon Himself the sins of the world. God does not want our human suffering. Nor does He want needless suffering; but in Jesus, all of human suffering is transformed. Jesus reminds us in the Word of God for us today, that our human suffering, which is the result of sin, has gained an ultimate purpose through Him: He who is the ultimate priest offers to God on our behalf, His own suffering and our suffering. Suffering is no longer transformed. This is no longer an empty cup, it is no longer senseless. Through our participation in the cross, our suffering and trials in participation with the suffering of Jesus is the means by which we are conformed to Christ’s life, and His death, so that we become conformed to His glory with the Father. Thus, St. Paul says: “...we make up for what is missing the suffering of Christ...” What is missing is our own participation in it!

I am reading an extraordinary book for a part of my daily Holy Hour: In Sinu Jesu. It is a collection of locutions, the words of Jesus to a mystic, a Benedictan Monk, who spends his day in Adoration before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. In it, Jesus tells his priests, that He means to reproduce His stigmata, His five wounds, spiritually in each of His priests who come to spend a Holy Hour with Him- not the wounds of Padre Pio; rather, the call to bear within us the sufferings of His people. This is not just for priests and deacons, it is for all of us. We are called to

bear within ourselves the suffering of Christ for His beloved people! That is the cup we are to drink and the baptism in which we are to be immersed!

During the month of October, we are called, in a special way, to pray and meditate upon the mysteries of the Holy Rosary. By this most powerful prayer, the armies of Islam were destroyed at the Battle of Leponto. The Rosary is so powerful, because in meditating upon the mysteries of our Salvation, we are immersed into that mystery in the Heart of Mary. And so, Pope Benedict reminds us that in her, we are immersed into the very heart of God in Jesus, because their two hearts cannot be separated! It has been the favorite prayer of Saint, and ordinary people, by which God has led them extraordinary holiness. In it, we stand with the Holy Mother of God at the foot of the Cross, and with the Beloved Disciple, the floodgates of the Compassion of God come gushing forth from His wounded heart for us and for the world. Let her lead you into the true path to Glory, just as She led St. John the Evangelist, the Beloved Disciple into the True Path to Glory at the foot of the Cross. United with Her Heart, our prayer and our sufferings become infinitely powerful, and Jesus has promised by this means to conquer the evil one now at work in the world and in the Church!