



HOMILY OF MGR NOËL SIMARD FOR THE GOOD FRIDAY OF APRIL 10, 2020

When his cross rises, the world is reborn!

On this Good Friday, we celebrate the Lord's passion with our gaze fixed on Jesus Christ, lifted up from the earth and drawing all people to Him (Jn 12:32). On this Good Friday, we are called to look at the cross and to stand by the cross.

Let us look at the cross. From an instrument of torment, condemnation and death, it has become, through Jesus' sacrifice, a symbol of supreme love, a language of grace and benevolence, a source of healing and forgiveness. This supreme act of love is well manifested in the Gospel of John that we have just heard and which presents us with the serenity and strength that Jesus shows in these dramatic hours. He goes to death like a lamb to the slaughter; he abandons himself and gives his life for our salvation. He puts his spirit into the hands of the Father, and his cry "It is done, into your hands, Father, I commend my spirit" is a cry of abandonment, of trust in suffering, of giving birth to new life. And as Isaiah says in the first reading, "It is our sufferings that He bears, our sorrows that He is burdened with". As we gaze longingly at Christ on the cross, as we venerate the cross where Christ dealt a mortal blow to the death and sin of the world, we are invited to make of our lives, lives fully offered to God and to others. For the only sacrifice - which means offering - that is worthwhile is the sacrifice we make by offering and surrendering our own lives drop by drop, day by day and step by step. This is what those who are on the front lines are doing at present to treat and accompany those infected and killed by the coronavirus. They are risking their lives so that life will triumph. And since Jesus Christ, one can no longer think of God without thinking of the human being, one can no longer love God without loving the human being, one can no longer serve God outside the human being, especially when he is disfigured and bruised by suffering, hatred or violence.

Let us look at the cross: in Jesus and through Jesus, it is a language of grace and benevolence. From now on we bless, by making the sign of the cross, because we know that it is a Tree of life from which life springs forth in abundance, we know and we believe that on the cross Jesus triumphs over evil and death, that through the cross it is love that triumphs.

Let us look at the cross: it is a source of healing and forgiveness. As the prophet Isaiah proclaims, "by his wounds we are healed". Yes, Lord, from your pierced heart you offer us life, the sacraments...Your wounded hands, your torn heart, are our refuge in anguish. We find in your wounds healing and forgiveness.

Today we face the challenges of this world and especially the death threats that the COVID-19 pandemic poses to our humanity. We feel the waves of anguish and fear that overwhelm us and shake our confidence in the future and our faith in your presence. Teach us trust and abandonment. Strengthen us in the darkness of our nights. Give us the strength to know that no death will defeat us as long as we rest in your hands that have shaped us and are with us. Help us to lift our gaze above the news with tumultuous and blurred horizons and to believe in a sunny tomorrow.

Let us stand by the cross like Mary and John. To stand by the cross is to listen to the One who gives his life out of love; it is to let our hearts be pierced by the pain and suffering of our brothers and sisters all over the world. It is to let God's compassion engulf and transform us to carry our own sufferings and the burdens of others. To stand by the cross is to stand by those who are going through times of trial and carrying heavy crosses. It is to pray and support those thousands of coronavirus patients, those thousands of families affected and grieving for the loss of a loved one, it is to pray and support those exhausted caregivers, those people who are losing their jobs. It is about sharing with those who have no source of income or who are living in precarious or destitute conditions. To stand by the cross is to listen and comfort a friend who is crying because he has just been told that he has cancer and that he has only a few months to live. To stand by the cross is to console a 48-year-old wife who lost her husband who was killed by hitting a tree during a ski descent, after colliding with his daughter.

At the same time, it is consoling this daughter who feels guilty for having caused the death of her father.

By entrusting his mother to John and John to his mother, Jesus makes his mother, the mother of the Church. Let us entrust ourselves to Mary, let us entrust to her our world which is going through very difficult times, let us entrust to her our Church. May the heart of Mary at the foot of the cross and the heart of Jesus touch our hearts and help us to live abandonment and trust in silence! And may the wound of the love that animates their hearts reach us so that we, in turn, may know how to spread this contagion of love that becomes acceptance, gift and forgiveness.

AMEN!