

Good Friday 2007

A Good Friday to you! Is good for you? Why is it good for you to be here? I think Good Friday for us is about our gratitude to God for his actions on the cross. Each year I ask God not to allow me to grow cold in my love for him. Each year I ask him to allow me to know the fellowship of his sufferings and the power of his resurrection.

I appreciate Thomas Merton's, Thoughts in Solitude, on being grateful to God for Jesus sacrifice. He says, "If we do not know Him in his sacrifice, how can it avail for us? We do not know Him unless we are grateful, and praise the Father with Him. There is no neutrality between gratitude and ingratitude. Those who do not love, hate. A man who truly responds to the goodness of God, and acknowledges all that he has received, cannot be a half-hearted Christian.

I show my gratefulness to God for his Son's death in small ways, like most. Every time I am asked to pray for someone, to help someone in need, I have an opportunity to show how glad I am that Christ loved me. He loved me as his disciple enough to give his life in self-sacrifice and become the scapegoat for human sin. He showed me with towel in hand how to keep his love from becoming dry and wearing out.

I don't think I'm a bad person, but I know that I have not always given myself fully, passionately in service. I also know that I do not live up to the faith that I preach. Part of being renewed this Good Friday for me is to have my conscience overhauled. When that happens I can be more sensitive to the needs of others and thus respond more completely to God's goodness.

It is good for us to be here today. It is good to be reminded of how expensive God's grace is. It is too easy to look away from the crucifixion of our Lord and think resurrection only. We want the blessings without the suffering. That's why I am glad that this church maintains the crucifix as crucial to the faith it believes. By the pulpit, at our chapel and in our social hall we remember his death lest we forget the cost of His love.

Thomas Merton adds, "To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything. He has given us – and He has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of His love; every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings it immense graces from Him. Gratitude therefore takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise of the goodness

of God. For the grateful man knows that God is good, not by hearsay but by experience. And that is what makes all the experience.”

Why is Good Friday good? I trust you can tell someone of your gratitude for this day from your heart. Amen.