

Holy Wednesday

Collect and Reading

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:

give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit;

and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, Amen.

Hebrews 12.1-3

1Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, 2looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. 3Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.

Reflection

“Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us”

Being away from the building we all love, the church, is challenging but never more difficult than when we are looking at this sacred time of Holy Week and Easter. Yet it is where we find ourselves this week. Not being part of the liturgy and the wonder of the passion, death and resurrection as we normally would be - and I wonder if this will bring us to deeper prayer, or will prayer be more challenging.

For a while I was good friends with a marathon runner, and he would talk about the stages of the race, the beginning filled with energy and hope, enthusiasm and excitement. But a few miles in and the pain began, the muscles would tire, the road seem to rise higher and longer, and doubt would set in. Why do this? Can I do this? Would it matter if I stopped? It is too hard, and it is silly to push myself. Then the second wind, the sudden rise in confidence and commitment.

As we journey through Holy Week, I pray for you. I pray that you may know the closeness of God, the love of God, the compassion of God to be with you always. This lockdown and virus really are a marathon to run, but this is the race set before us. And Jesus runs with us, and the Spirit will fill us with a second, third fourth, seventy times seven breath to give us the perseverance to the end.

Prayers

We pray for the world, for our community, for our church, for our family and friends, and for ourselves in our own words, concluding with:

Make your ways known upon earth, Lord God,
your saving power among all peoples.

Renew your Church in holiness
and help us to serve you with joy.

Guide the leaders of this and every nation,
that justice may prevail throughout the world.

Let not the needy be forgotten,
nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Make us instruments of your peace
and let your glory be over all the earth. Amen.