

A Sermon for Good Friday - 2022

In the Name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I'll begin this homily with a brief passage from later in Hebrews than the one we used for our second reading.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Hear this piece again, and please, hear it every time you read the stories of Jesus' Passion, “who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame.”

On that day, that first Good Friday, Jesus wasn't walking the path to Golgotha, He was walking toward His joy. That's what sustained Him. That's what kept Him going as they stripped Him, beat Him, spit on Him, jeered at Him and finally hung him from a rough-hewn Cross.

And what was his joy? What kept Him focused and even serene in the midst of the humiliation and pain?

You.

All of you, but more importantly each of you.

He saw me. He saw you. He saw us restored to relationship with Himself and His Father, a relationship that had been destroyed by sin.

He saw you washed clean in His blood and returned to the Father's embrace.

You were the reason for all of this that we just read. Not your sin, but you. And His love for you. And for the sake of the joy He felt at the mere thought of you, restored, washed, redeemed, He accepted all of this. You are that precious to Him. You are that beloved.

I'm going to read that passage from Hebrews again. Then I'm going to sit down and give you a few moments to ponder the wonder of that before we go on.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

Amen.