

Homily – Good Friday

April 14, 2017

In the darkness we stand at the foot of the cross with Jesus' mother and the beloved disciple. Others may prefer to stand with the Galilean women and other disciples on a far off hill, observing the crucifixion from a safe distance. But we stand directly below the suffering and dying Lord – in the darkness. It is a very difficult, painful place to be. We can see the spasms of his stretched out body, the streams of blood flowing down to the earth. We can hear his last words, barely audible but unmistakable in their intent.

It is soul-wrenching to stand at the foot of the cross. If we try to embrace the Lord on the cross, we will find how impossible this is without embracing the cross also! We cannot separate Jesus from his cross. And so, we stand at the foot of the cross in darkness.

But is there simply the darkness? With the eyes of faith – seeing as God sees – we also see a glimmer of light! Let us enter more deeply into the mystery of the cross. Jesus speaks to his mother and beloved disciple. Why does Jesus call his mother “woman”? Why does he give his disciple to her first, and only then her to his disciple? Is he simply trying to make arrangements for her

in the solitude that will follow? Pope Emeritus Benedict has written that, in the Passion Narrative of John's Gospel, Jesus is the New Adam and his mother is the New Eve. Unlike the first man and woman in the Garden of Eden who said "no" to God by eating of the forbidden fruit, the New Man and the New Woman have said "Yes" to God – at the Annunciation, in the Garden of Gethsemane, hanging on and standing before the Cross.

Saying "yes" to God in the darkness of our lives makes all the difference. We acknowledge that everything is in God's good, loving hands. A light shines in the darkness. Our challenge is to say with Jesus, "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Saying "Yes" to God's plan for us may well include sacrifice and death to self. But it will also begin to move us from the surrounding darkness into the light of God's enduring love for us. Let us together say "Yes" to God!