

In Nomine Jesu

CHRIST'S WAY OF SORROWS BRINGS THE WAY OF JOY TO BELIEVERS

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

Today the Church remembers Christ's Way of Sorrows that brings the Way of Joy for all believers. It is also the date, set long ago, for God's people to remember the annunciation of our Lord to the blessed Virgin Mary. On that day, when she learned she would conceive and bear the Christ Child, she heard (and evidently repeated to later followers of Jesus) words upon which this translation is grounded:

Fear not, O Mary! For you have found grace with the God. And behold! You will conceive in womb and you will bear Son, and you will call the Name of Him, Jesus!"¹

From that moment onward, the Mother of our Lord began to learn the mysteries of prophecies about the Christ that God had given to her Israelite forbearers. Despite what a pop-Christian Christmas song asks in a mantra-like fashion, Mary knew that her Son would die for our sons and daughters, and for her. She knew, because she had heard, as a devout child of Jewish people, the prophecies you read into your ears today from the Good News in Isaiah. Yet, like the rest of Jesus' followers, she did not understand that which she knew until the Holy Spirit was poured out in full measure. Before her Son, Jesus, the One Who would save His people, had ended his fourth decade of life, she would hear and see those prophecies enacted in His life and death. She would learn that which brings consolation to us today:

For the sacrificial love of the Christ continues to hold us together, having judged this, that One for all He died, therefore all died; and for all He died, so that

¹ Luke 1:30-31

*the ones continuing to live no longer they may continue to live for themselves, but for the One Who for them had died and had been raised.*²

This day, as we memorialize the events that led to and into our Savior's death, we are again reminded He died for love of us, and people like us. That is Jesus died for sinners, that they might die to sin in Him, and have life in Him. That means that the Word of Christ's Way of sorrows brings the Way of joy to believers. The proclamation of, the reception of, the living of Christ's sacrificial love in this Body of believers gives us strength to face all that this fallen life may cast our way. We continue learning to live for Him Who died for us, as we care for those in our midst who suffer.

That Jesus fulfilled all things necessary for salvation, that He died for us, is a comfort for this congregation today. We just have begun mourning the falling asleep in the Lord of another one of the members of the Body of Christ in this place. Donna Bond died in the Lord this Good Friday. She did so, fully believing in, and receiving God's gifts that deliver the promises of God in Christ Jesus. Because He died, she now lives in Him, even as her mortal remains are prepared for burial. We have comfort, for as we have received Christ's gifts with Donna at that Altar Table, we have known her by the Spirit. This is part of that which St. Paul communicates with these words:

*Therefore we from now no longer know (anyone) according to the flesh...*³

Take heart, we have known our sister in the Spirit, for we have all received the same Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life. The prophecies that were fulfilled in Jesus' death mean that the prophecies promised in His victory over death means that we who hold fast to the confession of Christ-crucified for the forgiveness of all our sins will see Donna again. We also may rejoice that because she believed in Jesus' death in her

² II Corinthians 5:14-15

³ II Corinthians 5:16a

sins, she communicated that loving message to her family, and four names were added this past Sunday to the Lamb's Book of Life through the Water and Word of Holy Baptism. That shows to us the Spirit's active work among us, and that we truly may know each other not just according to the flesh. The Apostle still declares:

*Wherefore, if anyone (is) in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things pass away; behold, they have become new.*⁴

Hear this clearly: Jesus' death brings life to all who believe in Him. You who have been also washed with the water and the Word have received, in this body of death, God's gift of eternal life. That is a present possession. That is because He fulfilled the Word of God to become the bearer of all your sins. Today, in the section of the Epistle we call II Corinthians, God, through the hand of St. Paul and the mouth of a man, declare:

*The One not having known sins for us sin was made, that we might have become the righteousness of God in Him.*⁵

The Stations of the Cross around this Nave depict for us Christ's Way of Sorrows on our behalf. It has been a year since they were introduced here. Today, on this most holy of days which calls to our remembrance all that Jesus did for us, you are free to take a moment to pause and reflect at each station. The devotional is there, the history is there, the images speak of the love of God in Christ that was shown when He bore our sins, your sins, into death and the grave. They are given to help us fulfill our Divine Commission – that is to be ambassadors of Christ. This is the message they convey:

⁴ II Corinthians 5:17

⁵ II Corinthians 5:21

Be reconciled to the God. The One not having known sins for us sin was made, that we might have become the righteousness of God in Him.⁶

The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

Good Friday, Noon (LSB One-Year Series)

Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12; II Corinthians 5:14-21; John 18:1-19:42

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Paster Michael A. Morehouse

Soli Deo Gloria

⁶ II Corinthians 5:20c-21