

Monday of Holy Week  
March 30, 2015  
St. Agnes Church

An enigma is something hard to explain and/or understand.  
The passion of Jesus Christ, his death on the cross, is an enigma.  
For the Jews a suffering Messiah was unheard of.  
Jesus' passion was proof for them against any messianic claim.  
According Dt 21:23 the crucified was supposed to be cursed by God.  
For the Gentiles death on a cross was dishonorable, humiliating and degrading.  
For both Jew and Gentile the cross was a scandal.

For the disciple, for the believer,  
the passion of Jesus Christ is part of the eternal saving plan of God.  
God raised up the crucified Christ showing him to be the Messiah.

Jesus himself was not surprised by the destiny of his death.  
He had foreseen it, predicted it, tried to prepare his disciples for its inevitable arrival.  
And when it came, he endured it freely.

From early on, within the Christian community,  
the passion of Jesus assumed an important role,  
an important place in worship and liturgy.  
Hymns portray a crucified and glorified Christ.  
The crucifixion is not a defeat; it is a victory.  
The sacraments too are related to the passion: in baptism we die and rise with Christ.  
In Eucharist we share in the fruits of Jesus' redemptive death.

The passion of Jesus Christ becomes the very pattern of our Christian living.  
We follow in the footsteps of Jesus.  
We go where he goes...to the cross.  
This is the door that leads us into his Kingdom.  
We die to sin and we rise to new life in the Spirit.  
By uniting ourselves to his death, we unite ourselves with his resurrection.

Let us remember, as we enter into our Holy Week celebrations  
that the foundation upon which the Mystery of our Faith is built is that of love.  
Jesus suffers because of his love; Jesus dies as an expression of his love.  
There is no greater good than the redemption of this world.  
This good was attained through suffering, suffering embraced in a spirit of love.  
The depth of Jesus' suffering is not the result of physical harm to his body.  
The depth of Jesus' suffering is caused by human sin.  
He takes upon himself the sins of all and pays the price for our eternal freedom.

Even though we cannot fully understand this mystery, it remains an enigma,  
we can draw close to it. We can stand in its light  
hoping that grace will penetrate into the depths and darkness of our souls.

“Help us, O Lord, to stand at your side, to remain with you as you suffer the cross,  
that we might find meaning and life in our own suffering. Amen!”