

Homily 1st Sunday in Lent, February 21

I recently read an interesting turn of the phrase regarding questions surround suffering and sin. The questions revolve around, “If the God we believe in is all powerful and all-knowing and all good, why doesn’t God put on His infinity Gauntlet and Thanos-snap everything right, forgive, and heal all illnesses at once?” (Please talk to someone under thirty if you don’t get the Avengers reference to “Thanos-Snap.”)

Without going into the regular reasons we give (which are all very rational and powerful), the one-line answer offered was, “Because that is not enough for love.” Love demands more.

That line attempts to get at the heart of our Faith. God is Love. God is Three Persons of Love who loved us into creation.

All our experiences of being loved and of loving know that an instantaneous correcting of things gone wrong doesn’t satisfy the love of a parent. It can seem like a brushing off of a distraction. A parent wants more than just absence of pain for their children. Mom and Dad would willingly take the pain for the child. Their love is about mutual care and being with each other.

And that is just for we who have been made in God’s image. So much more for God. It is not about being thrown out of a garden or drowned in a flood. It is about a plan whereby God enters into our pain, and being vulnerable to our sin. Because that is how Love does it.

Today, we hear of the Temptations. God the Son experiences human Temptations. The Devil’s name “Satan” means “Accuser.” As we recall from the Book of Job, Satan argues with God that we are not worthy of heaven. As God, Christ has heard those accusations. As man, Christ has experienced the Accuser’s temptations from the human side. We do not need to doubt His love for us, His healing of us comes from bearing our pain. And even more, His love moves Him to die and rise for us.

God knows what we are going through. God walks with us. Snapping fingers is not the way of Love. Christ is the way of Love.

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My brothers and sisters, the Prayers the priests prays out loud at Mass during these first days of Lent are beautiful, and teach us a lot about this time. They are in the bulletin this weekend. I offer them to you as something to reflect on.

I am NOT saying you are all like me, but...Sometimes when I am not the priest saying the Mass, I am not aware of the prayers. They wash over me. I end this homily by repeating these prayers. The first you heard at the beginning of Mass. The rest we will be hearing as Mass Continues.

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Collect

Grant, almighty God,
 through the yearly observances of holy Lent,
 that we may grow in understanding
 of the riches hidden in Christ
 and by worthy conduct pursue their effects.
 Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
 who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 God, for ever and ever.

Prayer over the Offerings

Give us the right dispositions, O Lord, we pray,
 to make these offerings,
 for with them we celebrate the beginning
 of this venerable and sacred time.
 Through Christ our Lord.

Preface:

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
 always and everywhere to give you thanks,
 Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
 through Christ our Lord.

By abstaining forty days from earthly food,
 he consecrated through his fast
 the pattern of our Lenten observance
 and, by overturning the snares of the ancient serpent,
 taught us to cast out the leaven of malice,
 so that, celebrating the Paschal Mystery,
 we might pass over at last to the eternal paschal feast.

And so, with the company of Angels and Saints,
 we sing the hymn of your praise,
 as without end we acclaim:

Prayer after Communion

Renewed now with heavenly bread,
 by which faith is nourished, hope increased,
 and charity strengthened,
 we pray, O Lord,
 that we may learn to hunger for Christ,
 the true and living Bread,
 and strive to live by every word
 which proceeds from your mouth.
 Through Christ our Lord.

Prayer over the People:

May bountiful blessing, O Lord, we pray
 come down upon your people,
 that hope may grow in tribulation,
 virtue be strengthened in temptation,
 and eternal redemption be assured.
 Through Christ our Lord.

