

Palm Sunday

April 2, 2023

At Gethsemane, in the garden, Jesus **“threw himself on the ground”** and prayed a single prayer—three times, **“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.”**

“My Father...” he prays.

Less than a day later, in fact Jesus has drunk of the cup of suffering to its very dregs, and his last words of prayer before he dies on the cross, sandwiched between two screams, his final prayer, **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”**

In the abyss of darkness, Jesus questions the silence of his Father. On the threshold of defeat, Jesus wonders why his Father didn't take the cup of suffering away...why his Father isn't with him.

Sisters and brothers: Nowhere else in the Gospels does Jesus ever call his Father “God.” Taking his last mortal breath, the Word made flesh collapses into a cry for a missing God (1).

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

The four Gospels give us four different angles from which to gaze upon the crucified Jesus. They give us four perspectives to see him in a different light, depending where we stand before the cross. And, you know: For those of us who've ever been on the verge of despair in life...For any of us who've ever felt cheated in life, or alone in our suffering...oh, St. Patrick's, we can stare at that Jesus given us in today's passion story.

We can then bring what's in our cup of suffering and share it with Jesus' cup.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Sometimes we need to stare lovingly at our Savior from that vantage point.

- (1) See Raymond E. Brown, S.S., A Crucified Christ in Holy Week: Essays on the Four Gospel Passion Narratives (Collegeville, Minnesota: 1986), pp. 43-44. See also his book, The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave, volume 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1994), pp. 1044-51.

General Intercessions

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Grace us, the church, faithfully to follow Jesus, the Suffering Servant, and to celebrate this Holy Week experiencing his mercy and healing; we pray to you, O Lord—

Bless especially during these days our Jewish sisters and brothers as they celebrate their Passover, as well as Muslims as they are in the midst of *Ramadan*; we pray to you, O Lord—

Give support and hope to immigrants, especially children, as they seek safety and a new life of security and hope; we pray to you, O Lord—

Empower us to be healing balm to the forgotten, the impoverished, and the sick, especially Pope Francis; we pray to you, O Lord—

Grant solace and hope to all who are suffering from the recent tornadoes, and grant eternal rest to those who have lost their lives; we pray to you, O Lord—

Raise to new life all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, especially Hamilton Ramirez, Russell Travis, and those killed in the Nashville school shooting; we pray to you, O Lord—

