

## **Good Friday Homily** **Deacon Thom Trunzo**

When I was a child and teenager, Good Friday put me into a funk of sorts. I really internalized the whole experience, starting to feel that darkness entering in as I left the dark church after Holy Thursday Mass the night before. Often I would withdraw, probably not in the healthiest way, physically retiring to my room for most of the morning, fasting, not wanting to be around anyone until we left as a family for the 3 o'clock Good Friday liturgy. Some years we would have adoration in a darkened church during the day up until 3pm, kneeling in front of the empty tabernacle. As an Altar Server, I would sign-up for multiple hours and make it a mission to kneel throughout my 2 or 3 hour tour, never taking a break to sit. I don't recommend this AT ALL, but it was a child's way of dealing with the spiritual upheaval and accepting that "Good old Catholic guilt" as I understood it then. I think I've grown some!

But this year is a very different year as churches are closed and we who thrive on and are nourished by the company of our church community are isolated and cut-off on several levels from social interactions with the ones we love and depend on.

For Beth and I who, for many years in one of our former parishes were part of a group referred to as "The Liturgy Police," this year would have been devastating! But thankfully we have grown and strive, instead, to look for God in the strangeness of this time and are open to being spiritually moved by embracing these most sacred days in different yet powerful ways.

As I was reflecting on our isolation, and having read a profound quote on Facebook, I began to relate to the apostles and disciples of Jesus in a more real and personal way. In even a much more dramatic way than our inability to gather during this Triduum, I started to see how it must have been like for them having their dreams shattered. They went from being welcomed into Jerusalem with Jesus being proclaimed as king and they were held high in esteem as a special part of his entourage to this – darkness and an unfathomable turn of events; Jesus' arrest in the darkness of the night then subjected to a mock trial. And now, on this day that we know as Good Friday, they experienced it as anything but good! Hiding in the shadows, afraid of coming into contact with each other, being petrified that they would be recognized! Terror overtook them! They scattered, as scripture predicted, like lost sheep.

For us, unable to gather on this day, perhaps our feelings of isolation and even loneliness, we may conclude that several of the foundational blocks that underpin our traditions have been destroyed forever! Sensing the end to much of the life that we took for granted and normal has put us more in harmony with the disciples than in any of the previous Good Friday liturgies we experienced in the past.

Perhaps this year, we have an opportunity to truly enter into the passion of Christ not as a spectator, but as an apostle or disciple of yesterday, cut-off and alone, afraid, isolated and not sure of what tomorrow will bring. Perhaps God is working as God always does in our "dark nights of the soul" to create something better, something new, something that will become a great light. If we can set aside our feelings of how different and unacceptable these High Holy Days are for us, reframe our thoughts and connect our spirits with how much closer to the followers of Jesus we are today, we will be opening-up ourselves to new revelations, new transformations, new realizations that God never abandons us.

As we sit today alone and a little out of sorts, let us recall that what we proclaimed this past Christmas remains a fundamental spiritual truth - "Emmanuel – God with us!" Always!