

Father Brad Neely

Good Friday Passion of the Lord

Cycle A: SPPP: Apr 22, 2011

Is 52:13-53-12; Heb 4:14f; Jn 18:1-19:42

In praying the Stations of the Cross earlier today,
we used a guide published
by a Redemptorist Order,
which took Mary's perspective
as her Son carried His Cross to Calvary.

1—When they shouted to crucify her Son,
Mary wanted them to stop,
but *she knew this had to be,*
so she stood by and cried silently.”

2---When Mary saw the burden of the cross
on the back of her Son,
she wanted to carry it herself,
“but *she knew it had to be,*
so walked on silently.”

3---When the guards kicked Jesus
after he had fallen for the first time,
Mary wanted to protect Him with her own
body,
“but *she knew this had to be,*
and walked on and wept silently.”

4---The look of pain and anguish
in the eyes of Jesus
told Mary that there was a purpose
for all of this.
“*She knew He was right,*
so she followed and prayed silently.”

5---When the guards conscripted Simon
to help carry the Cross,
Jesus asked the guards “why?”
But *Mary “knew [why]*
and followed silently.”

6---When Veronica wiped the face of Jesus
and was pulled away by the guards,
Mary knew why,

and “**walked on in faith, silently.**”

7---When Mary saw her Son fall the second
time,
she was gripped with bitter anguish,
but she “*knew this had to be,*”
and “**walked on silently.**”

8---When Mary noticed
that the women of Jerusalem
did not make the connection
between weeping for themselves
and the impending death of her Son,
Mary knew what the connection was,
and as Jesus walked on,
she “followed silently.”

9---When her Son fell the third time,
prompting the guards to scream at him,
Mary wondered what they would do to him
next,
but she “*knew this had to be,*
so **she [continued to] climb the hill
silently behind Him.**”

10---When Jesus was stripped of his clothes,
and the clotting of blood
pulled his skin with the garments,
Mary's pain was unbearable.
Yes, since *she “knew this had to be,*
so she stood by and cried silently.”

11---When Jesus was nailed to the Cross,
Mary's heart was in great pain,
now,—at the end of her Son's earthly life.
But *she “knew this had to be,*
so stood by and prayed silently.”

12---When her Son died on the Cross,
his anguish was over,
but Mary's anguish was greater than ever.
*But, “this had to be, and [she] had to
accept it,*
so she stood by and mourned silently.”

13---As Jesus was taken down
from the Cross after his death,
Mary's sorrow cut very deeply,
yet at the same time,
she sensed a deep joy.
Her Son's life had ended cruelly,
but there was new life to come from it.
She "knew this had to be,
so she prayed silently."

14---As the tomb was closed
after placing the body of Jesus inside,
Mary "knew this had to be.
She would wait in faith silently."

15---After her Son had risen from the dead,
new life burst onto the human landscape.
Mary knew that this had to be,
and she felt like rejoicing forever,
but not in silence."

We come into the Church this evening
to find a stark sanctuary,
and an empty tabernacle.
The church has this appearance,
because our Savior has gone
to be the **sacrificial lamb**
of the New Covenant.
He offers himself as a **perfect sacrifice**
to the heavenly Father,
to reverse the consequences of sin
set in motion by humanity's rejection of
God---
that consequence being death.

To accomplish this,
He is gone this evening.
He has been taken---
scourged---
and nailed to a cross.

In the wisdom of God,
He had to die an earthly death
in order to **rise** from the dead,
claiming victory over it.

When we enter the church
the other 364 days of the year,
we may take Christ's presence for granted.
This one day of the year,
Jesus is not present in the sanctuary.
We offer our solidarity to Him this evening,
as we venerate the cross on which he hung--
a blood stained cross---
not a cross of defeat,
but a cross of victory.