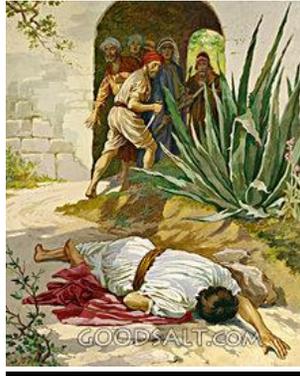


Homily

03.22.2019 – Friday Lenten Weekday (II)

Gn: 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a

Mt 21:33-43, 45-46



In this morning's gospel reading, Jesus tells a parable in which the son of a vineyard owner is killed by the tenants. In this way, Jesus points ahead to his own rejection and death. Having spoken the parable, Jesus quotes from one of the psalms, 'It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone'. Here Jesus points ahead to his resurrection. Although he was rejected by the religious and political leaders of the day, Jesus rose from the dead and in so doing became the keystone of a new temple, the temple of the church, the community of those who believed in him.

The experience of Jesus also suggests that God always has a purpose for what is rejected. God is not in the business of rejecting. Although we can reject God, God never rejects us. Any little experience of rejection can leave us deflated; we can be tempted to give up. The parable suggests that God is not like that. In the face of rejection, God just keeps working away; he takes the experience of rejection, the rejected stone, and builds something new upon it.

There may be times in our lives when we feel a little bit like the rejected stone. We reach out to someone and they spurn us or do not respond to us. We can feel hurt and upset, annoyed with ourselves for leaving ourselves so vulnerable. Yet, those painful experiences in life can

contain the seeds of new life. The Lord can work powerfully through them for our ultimate good. The experience that we might have considered at the time as totally negative turns out to bear rich fruit in our lives. We learn something from it; we grow through it. What seemed like an experience of death becomes a moment of new life. The Lord can always transform the rejected stone into the keystone. What he did for his Son he can do for us all.

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It's important to understand that the rejection Jesus experienced left deep pain and suffering. Suffering in this sense was an act of love, not an act of weakness. Jesus didn't suffer interiorly because of pride or a poor self-image. Rather, His Heart hurt because He loved so deeply. And when that love was rejected, it filled Him with the holy sorrow spoken of in the Beatitudes ("Blessed are they who mourn..." Matthew 5:4). This sort of sorrow was not a form of despair; rather, it was a deep experience of the loss of the love of another. It was holy, and a result of His burning love for all.

We are called to imitate this love and to share in His ability to not only forgive, but to also offer the holy love of mercy. When we do, we also will become a cornerstone of love and grace for those who need it the most.

Let us pray:

Lord, help me to be that cornerstone. Help me to not only forgive every time I'm hurt but let me also offer love and mercy in return. You are the divine and perfect example of this love. May I share in this same love, crying out with You, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

Jesus, I trust in You.