



## 11th discussion for “Family Night” 03/21/09

### Lenten Meditation

### Fasting and the Crucifixion

**Fasting:** Let us meditate...

Matthew 4:1-3 “Then the Holy Spirit led Jesus to the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. And after he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came to him.....”

#### **What do we learn from Our Lord Jesus:**

1. **Prayer:** Jesus spent forty days and nights fasting from physical food and living on spiritual food, which is prayer. This teaches us to fast and pray, so that when temptation comes, we will be ready and not give in to Satan.
2. **Asceticism and humility:** The Lord Jesus fasted in the wilderness – not in a castle or house – to teach us that fasting is not only giving up food, but is also asceticism and the renouncing of luxury and worldly, material things, which can distance us from God.
3. **Not giving up to temptation and difficulties:** The Lord Jesus is our example to guide us when we are subjected to temptations and difficulties. The Lord Jesus faced temptation from Satan, but he did not give in to it. Likewise, the extent of our obedience and submission to the Lord is confirmed only in the face of temptation. God allows us to be tempted so that we may discover who we really are and how able we are to withstand hardship.
4. **Self-giving:** The Lord Jesus offered us a lesson in giving, by giving up his life on the cross for us. Our fasting is therefore not complete unless we also give of ourselves and our possessions. Giving thus includes offering our time to help others, as well as our material wealth: “Whatever you did for one of the least of my brethren, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40). We should therefore give generously for Jesus’ sake.
5. **Repentance:** The Lord Jesus requires of us that we repent of our sins while there is still time. Let us therefore take advantage of the opportunity of Lent to think about the sins in word or deed or omission of which we have not yet repented – and repent of them now. The Lord Jesus said: “The time has come and the kingdom of God is here. Repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15)

#### **The Crucifixion: Let us Meditate...**

Mark 15:16-20 “The soldiers led Him away inside the palace..... They clothed Him in purple and, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on Him. They began to Salute Him with, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and kept striking His head with a reed and spitting upon Him. They Knelt before Him in homage. And when they had mocked Him, they stripped Him of the purple cloak, dressed Him in His own clothes, and led Him out to crucify Him.”

#### **What do we learn from Our Lord Jesus:**

1. Bearing pain: In this life, we must carry the cross of pain, sickness and adversity even death, so we can receive eternal life. The crosses we bear are not punishment, but a joyful opportunity to have some small share in what He suffered and overcome Satan’s temptations, which God allows to test our commitment. He said: “Whoever wants to follow me must deny himself and take up his cross every day and follow me” (Luke 9:23).
2. Forgiveness: The Lord Jesus Christ was mocked and struck and hurt, spat upon, whipped and made fun of. We sometimes participate in that when we fall into sin, especially when we fail to forgive others



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who have hurt us. Let us learn from the Lord Jesus, who said from the cross: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

3. Love: The Lord Jesus Christ loved us unto death upon the cross, and we all have sinned against Him. He commanded us: “Love your enemies, and bless those who curse you; Do good to those who hate you and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). “If you love only those who love you, what merit is there in that?” (Luke 6:32).
4. Total submission to the will of God: The Lord Jesus kneeled and prayed saying: “Father, if it be your will, take this cup from me; but not my own will, but thine be done” (Luke 22:42). We are usually ready to pray like this when we are feeling good; but when we are under temptation, we find it difficult to accept God’s will, and thus we remain oppressed and battered by the waves of life. When we abandon ourselves to our Lord’s will, whatever it may be, only then will we feel peace and calm and security.
5. Depending on God: We must be certain that our Lord Jesus does not leave us a single moment without His care, especially when we go through difficult times. We must however depend on Him, meditating on His last words on the cross: “Woman, this is your son.” Then he said to John, “This is your mother.” So he did not leave his mother without care.

#### What do we learn from our mother the Virgin Mary who stood at the foot of the cross?

John 19:25 “And there, at the cross of Jesus, stood Mary his mother and his mother’s sister, the wife of Cleopas and Mary Magdalene.”

We observe that our beloved mother saw her only son suffer - his blood gushing out before her eyes - and die. The gospel describes her standing at the foot of the cross, in faith, in silence and without complaining, bearing the pain, completely given over to the plan of God. She believes that death is not the end, but only the beginning of eternal life. It is only a stage of transition. She therefore can console every mother and father who have lost a child, as well as anyone who has lost a loved one. She herself went through the most difficult pain and sorrow, but she continued to believe. She thus remains our supreme example.

#### I would like to share with you my personal experience:

When our son Andrew was in the hospital, I turned to my Holy Mother, because she is a mother and she can understand me, and I asked her:

My sweet mother, please help me, one of my sons is badly hurt, so she looked at me and said:

“Don’t worry my daughter because MY ONLY son was hurt too, and he was suffering in front of my own eyes....”

But my loving mother, my son is a young man and he is just starting his life, so she told me:

“And my Son was a young man too!!!!”

..... And the doctors told us that he is going to pass away soon!!!! So she looked at me and said:

“My loving daughter, my Son passed away too, but remember that He rose from the dead to give us all Eternal Life, so I am sure He is not going to leave you alone. He will help you to carry this cross, and He will give you the strength and the peace you need. You might not understand His will now, but just trust in Him.



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So I surrendered to the will of God and I told Him “Andrew was your son before that he was ours. Let Thy will be done and not mine.” Then He gave me His peace that the world can’t give!!!!!!

So, I thought if my spiritual Mother lost her son when He was in the midst of his young age, who am I to complain????? But in the contrary now I am proud to share her pain when she is standing by her son’s cross, now she is not alone!!!!!!

What do we learn from the Church?

During Lent, the Church uses the color purple as a symbol of kingship, because Christ, the Lord of glory, is King of Kings. Using purple, rather than black, emphasizes that Christ’s death was his pathway to kingship.

And the color purple is a mix of two colors: blue, it means peace and red, the color of salvation.

What do we learn from the priest?

We notice that on Good Friday, the day on which we remember Jesus’ death, the priest wears red, rather than black, signifying the blood of Jesus that saves us from sin. And when the priest celebrates a memorial mass for our departed loved ones, he wears white to proclaim what our Lord says in John 8:12: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me does not walk in darkness, but has eternal life.”

The tradition of wearing black, then, is only an ancient tradition which does not proclaim what our Lord Jesus Christ has done – He has trampled on the darkness and blackness of the tomb and has given us light and eternal life, through His resurrection from the dead. This is the foundation of our faith. The color black is the extinction of the light, according to the explanation of “Newton Law.” Does it then show our faith in the light of Christ, or Glorify God????

And one more thing, how come the custom for men includes that they can wear white shirts, does that mean that they don’t RESPECT the person that passed away, or does that mean that they have MORE faith than women???? Women asked for their equal rights in every aspect of life, but how about in FAITH?? ? I think it’s about time....

#### Let us also hear what our Lord Jesus says in Luke 23:26-28, concerning mourning:

“As they were leading Him away (to the cross)...large numbers of people followed Him, and of women too, who mourned and lamented Him. But Jesus turned to them and said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children.’” So Jesus shows us that our loved ones who have gone to eternal life are in peace and light, while we here on earth are the ones who experience hard times.

Some of us, however, fear breaking traditions and customs and what others may say. Jesus, in the gospel of Mark 7:8, replies: “You have omitted the commandment of God in order to preserve human tradition.” This affirms that traditions and customs are not from the ten commandments. If the tradition does not embody what glorifies God in us, then we need to change it for what is better.

Because remember what Jesus told us in Matthew 10:32-33 “Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly father”.



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Please join us for the next "Family Night" discussion on April 18, 2009 and it's going to be about "RESURRECTION" please if you have any question about this subject, don't hesitate to e-mail me.

Prepared by Mrs. Christina Ennabe. [Chrise121@aol.com](mailto:Chrise121@aol.com)

Resources:

The Holy Bible and the Holy Spirit.