

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Apr 26th 2017

We see all kinds of fans at just about any athletic event holding signs with “John 3:16.” What is the meaning of “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life?”

I write this as I close on another season of Lent. Every year, I have a list of things I will try to do better during Lent. I’m not into the giving up of something — it’s much more challenging for me to examine areas in which improvement is needed. Where am struggling to be the person God calls me to be? This Lent has been a tough one. I find myself hanging on to my faith by a thread — hopefully a very strong thread!

2017 has been a year of significant loss. You know it’s bad when your family starts to divide and conquer because there have been so many visitations and funerals for close ones. Some of us (me) felt the need to protect ourselves a bit from so much emotional pain. It’s very painful to unexpectedly lose a dear friend who was 48 years old, healthy and essentially had the stomach flu. She just didn’t wake up in the morning. This was a final straw for me. My faith has been shaken! How could a loving God take such an impactful woman too soon? There were so many who depended on her — her family, her coworkers, her students and their families, and her many, many friends—all of whom will be forever changed for knowing her.

It’s faith that has sustained not only me, but so many others who face pain, and struggle. As I tearfully sat through my friend’s rosary, and funeral I heard her Dad and her brothers remind all of us that this is all part of God’s divine plan. He loves us, and we must trust God. Who are we to feel such sadness, when our sister was had gone to paradise? I continue to grieve, try to help, and make sense of all of this—I remember that God gave his beloved son. I have been sitting with these words often lately—God so loved the world (me!) that he gave his son so that we may have eternal life.

Whoever believes in him will not be condemned,

but whoever does not believe has already been condemned,

because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

And this is the verdict,

that the light came into the world,

but people preferred darkness to light,

because their works were evil.

For everyone who does wicked things hates the light

and does not come toward the light,

so that his works might not be exposed.

But whoever lives the truth comes to the light,

so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

I write this as we embark on Holy Week. The loss of Christ on Good Friday is a powerful reminder of who and what I risk losing, and how I need hang on to that thread, and to never allow the Lord's death to occur in my life.

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