

Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Mar 17th 2024

If the grain of wheat does not die...

The sacrifice of life that Jesus made on the Cross was a puzzle for many. Why was it a necessity for the Son of God to be crucified? It was indeed a necessity for us to realize that his love for the Father as well as his love for us is total, unconditional and without any reservation. His self-giving sacrifice produced the fruit of life.

John presents the human face of Jesus as he prepares for the final sacrifice. He is afraid as everyone is afraid of death; he would like to avoid it. A premature death, in the prime of life, violent, absurd, abandoned by all, even by his friends, delivered by one of his disciples, therefore, victim of hatred.

Here is the inner drama of Jesus and he wonders: What can I say at this moment... ask the Father to save me from this hour? But I have come for this very hour that the supreme revelation of the love of God will take place and I have to go through it.' And he prays: "Father, give glory to your Name." 'Through me show forth your glory.' It is Jesus' acceptance of the Father's plan.

Love does not manifest itself without surrender, without renouncing one's own will. Spouses would know this better. There is no marriage that works well without a good dose of sacrifice, of renunciation, of surrender. In the same way, the new covenant is signed in mutual surrender. But since it is God's initiative to sign this covenant with humanity, to give us life, it is God who takes the first step in that surrender.

To show us His good will, He became one of us, went through the same joys and difficulties as we do and ended up dying like anybody else. But of course, with a difference: he made his death a sign of his love and a sign of life. His death is the grain of wheat that dies, and when it dies, it bears much fruit. The cross, an instrument of death, becomes a sign of life.

Do we know of any cases in which death or pain have been occasions to grow in love and life? Do we want to make our life a gift to others "so that they may have life"? How?

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