

Devotion.
31 March 2010

The last word from the cross was "Father..." - Luke 23:46

"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." We cannot hear these words without calling to mind what Jesus had just suffered. Do you remember how for three awful hours the perfect fellowship between the Father and the Son, between the first and second persons of the Trinity, was broken? Do you remember how the light of God's presence was removed from Jesus and there was darkness over the whole land? And for this reason Jesus said, "I am thirsty" (Jn 19:28) meaning, in the words of the psalmist,

(Ps 42:1-2) As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

Up to this hour on the cross, there had been perfect and unbroken fellowship between the Father and the Son. During the Last Supper, for instance, when Jesus prayed his High Priestly prayer, he could say to the Father, "All I have is yours, and all you have is mine ... you are in me and I am in you" (Jn 17:10,21). In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus could pray to his Father: "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" (Lk 22:42).

Jesus' first word upon the cross was to the Father: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34). And now his last word is to the Father: "Father," he said, "into your hands I commit my spirit." But between this first and last word, he hung on the cross for six hours: three hours spent suffering at the hands of men and another three hours spent suffering at the hand of God. When Jesus said these last words, what he came to do, was done. The cup of God's wrath was drained (Lk 22:42).

This last word from the cross shows Jesus to again have fellowship with the Father. The Saviour is once more in communion with the Father. He can once more speak to the Father, because the Father is no longer removed from Him.

He whom Jesus calls Father is also our Father because of Christ and his work upon the cross. The Father is also my Father. What comfort is contained in this title! What assurance it conveys! God is my Father. He is my Father and he loves me, he cares for me and supplies all my needs. "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us," says John, "that we should be called children of God!" (1 Jn 3:1).

In Jesus Christ we too have the confidence to call God our Father. Death is not the end for us. After death my spirit continues to live. My prayer is that your spirit and my spirit will live with God, for the other possibility is too horrible to even contemplate.

My prayer is that this Holy Week will help you to commit your life, yourself, yes your spirit, to God in Jesus Christ who suffered for us. That through the gracious work of the Holy Spirit you will understand the love that caused Jesus to go through darkness, to lead us into the light of fellowship with our heavenly Father.

Because of the suffering of Jesus, and his resurrection, your spirit is also forever in God's safe keeping!

Prayer - Dear Lord, do not allow anything to stand in my way of sharing this Holy Week with you. Bring us all to glorious victory through your Son on Easter Sunday, because in faith we know that you walked through the shadows of death, in order to lead us to the light.