

Gratitude Foundation



*“Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?
Has only this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?”*

(Lk. 17:15-17)

Palm Sunday—Year B

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“In all things give thanks, it is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”

(1 Thess: 5:18)

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

Reading I

Isaiah 50:4-7

The Lord GOD has given me
a well-trained tongue,
that I might know how to speak to the weary
a word that will rouse them.
Morning after morning
he opens my ear that I may hear;
and I have not rebelled,
have not turned back.
I gave my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who plucked my beard;
my face I did not shield
from buffets and spitting.
The Lord GOD is my help,
therefore I am not disgraced;
I have set my face like flint,
knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

R. (2a) My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

All who see me scoff at me;
they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:
“He relied on the LORD; let him deliver him,
let him rescue him, if he loves him.”

R. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Indeed, many dogs surround me,
a pack of evildoers closes in upon me;
They have pierced my hands and my feet;
I can count all my bones.

R. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

They divide my garments among them,
and for my vesture they cast lots.
But you, O LORD, be not far from me;
O my help, hasten to aid me.
R. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

I will proclaim your name to my brethren;
in the midst of the assembly I will praise you:
“You who fear the LORD, praise him;
all you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him;
revere him, all you descendants of Israel!”
R. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Reading II

Philippians 2:6-11

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
something to be grasped.
Rather, he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
coming in human likeness;
and found human in appearance,
he humbled himself,
becoming obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.
Because of this, God greatly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name
which is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Verse before the Gospel

Philippians 2:8-9

Christ became obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.
Because of this, God greatly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name which is above every name.

Gospel

Mark 14:1—15:47

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were to take place in two days' time.
So the chief priests and the scribes were seeking a way to arrest him by treachery and put him to death.
They said, "Not during the festival, for fear that there may be a riot among the people."
When he was in Bethany reclining at table in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of perfumed oil, costly genuine spikenard.
She broke the alabaster jar and poured it on his head.
There were some who were indignant.
"Why has there been this waste of perfumed oil? It could have been sold for more than three hundred days' wages and the money given to the poor."
They were infuriated with her.
Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you make trouble for her? She has done a good thing for me. The poor you will always have with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them, but you will not always have me. She has done what she could. She has anticipated anointing my body for burial. Amen, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed to the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."
Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went off to the chief priests to hand him over to them.
When they heard him, they were pleased and promised to pay him money.
Then he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.
On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him,
"Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?"
He sent two of his disciples and said to them,
"Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water. Follow him. Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'" Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there."
The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he came with the Twelve.
And as they reclined at table and were eating, Jesus said,
“Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me,
one who is eating with me.”
They began to be distressed and to say to him, one by one,
“Surely it is not I?”
He said to them,
“One of the Twelve, the one who dips with me into the dish.
For the Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him,
but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed.
It would be better for that man if he had never been born.”
While they were eating,
he took bread, said the blessing,
broke it, and gave it to them, and said,
“Take it; this is my body.”
Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them,
and they all drank from it.
He said to them,
“This is my blood of the covenant,
which will be shed for many.
Amen, I say to you,
I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine
until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”
Then, after singing a hymn,
they went out to the Mount of Olives.
Then Jesus said to them,
“All of you will have your faith shaken, for it is written:
*I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be dispersed.*
But after I have been raised up,
I shall go before you to Galilee.”
Peter said to him,
“Even though all should have their faith shaken,
mine will not be.”
Then Jesus said to him,
“Amen, I say to you,
this very night before the cock crows twice
you will deny me three times.”
But he vehemently replied,
“Even though I should have to die with you,
I will not deny you.”
And they all spoke similarly.
Then they came to a place named Gethsemane,
and he said to his disciples,
“Sit here while I pray.”
He took with him Peter, James, and John,
and began to be troubled and distressed.
Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death.
Remain here and keep watch.”
He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed
that if it were possible the hour might pass by him;
he said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible to you.

Take this cup away from me,
but not what I will but what you will.”
When he returned he found them asleep.
He said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep?
Could you not keep watch for one hour?
Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test.
The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.”
Withdrawing again, he prayed, saying the same thing.
Then he returned once more and found them asleep,
for they could not keep their eyes open
and did not know what to answer him.
He returned a third time and said to them,
“Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?
It is enough. The hour has come.
Behold, the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners.
Get up, let us go.
See, my betrayer is at hand.”
Then, while he was still speaking,
Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived,
accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs
who had come from the chief priests,
the scribes, and the elders.
His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying,
“The man I shall kiss is the one;
arrest him and lead him away securely.”
He came and immediately went over to him and said,
“Rabbi.” And he kissed him.
At this they laid hands on him and arrested him.
One of the bystanders drew his sword,
struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his ear.
Jesus said to them in reply,
“Have you come out as against a robber,
with swords and clubs, to seize me?
Day after day I was with you teaching in the temple area,
yet you did not arrest me;
but that the Scriptures may be fulfilled.”
And they all left him and fled.
Now a young man followed him
wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body.
They seized him,
but he left the cloth behind and ran off naked.
They led Jesus away to the high priest,
and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together.
Peter followed him at a distance into the high priest’s courtyard
and was seated with the guards, warming himself at the fire.
The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin
kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus
in order to put him to death, but they found none.
Many gave false witness against him,
but their testimony did not agree.
Some took the stand and testified falsely against him,
alleging, “We heard him say,

‘I will destroy this temple made with hands
and within three days I will build another
not made with hands.’”
Even so their testimony did not agree.
The high priest rose before the assembly and questioned Jesus,
saying, “Have you no answer?
What are these men testifying against you?”
But he was silent and answered nothing.
Again the high priest asked him and said to him,
“Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed One?”
Then Jesus answered, “I am;
and ‘you will see the Son of Man
seated at the right hand of the Power
and coming with the clouds of heaven.’”
At that the high priest tore his garments and said,
“What further need have we of witnesses?
You have heard the blasphemy.
What do you think?”
They all condemned him as deserving to die.
Some began to spit on him.
They blindfolded him and struck him and said to him, “Prophecy!”
And the guards greeted him with blows.
While Peter was below in the courtyard,
one of the high priest’s maids came along.
Seeing Peter warming himself,
she looked intently at him and said,
“You too were with the Nazarene, Jesus.”
But he denied it saying,
“I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.”
So he went out into the outer court.
Then the cock crowed.
The maid saw him and began again to say to the bystanders,
“This man is one of them.”
Once again he denied it.
A little later the bystanders said to Peter once more,
“Surely you are one of them; for you too are a Galilean.”
He began to curse and to swear,
“I do not know this man about whom you are talking.”
And immediately a cock crowed a second time.
Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him,
“Before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times.”
He broke down and wept.
As soon as morning came,
the chief priests with the elders and the scribes,
that is, the whole Sanhedrin held a council.
They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate.
Pilate questioned him,
“Are you the king of the Jews?”
He said to him in reply, “You say so.”
The chief priests accused him of many things.
Again Pilate questioned him,

“Have you no answer?
See how many things they accuse you of.”
Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.
Now on the occasion of the feast he used to release to them
one prisoner whom they requested.
A man called Barabbas was then in prison
along with the rebels who had committed murder in a rebellion.
The crowd came forward and began to ask him
to do for them as he was accustomed.
Pilate answered,
“Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?”
For he knew that it was out of envy
that the chief priests had handed him over.
But the chief priests stirred up the crowd
to have him release Barabbas for them instead.
Pilate again said to them in reply,
“Then what do you want me to do
with the man you call the king of the Jews?”
They shouted again, “Crucify him.”
Pilate said to them, “Why? What evil has he done?”
They only shouted the louder, “Crucify him.”
So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd,
released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged,
handed him over to be crucified.
The soldiers led him away inside the palace,
that is, the praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort.
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.
They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon,
a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country,
the father of Alexander and Rufus,
to carry his cross.
They brought him to the place of Golgotha
— which is translated Place of the Skull —,
They gave him wine drugged with myrrh,
but he did not take it.
Then they crucified him and divided his garments
by casting lots for them to see what each should take.
It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him.
The inscription of the charge against him read,
“The King of the Jews.”
With him they crucified two revolutionaries,
one on his right and one on his left.
Those passing by reviled him,
shaking their heads and saying,

“Aha! You who would destroy the temple
and rebuild it in three days,
save yourself by coming down from the cross.”
Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes,
mocked him among themselves and said,
“He saved others; he cannot save himself.
Let the Christ, the King of Israel,
come down now from the cross
that we may see and believe.”
Those who were crucified with him also kept abusing him.
At noon darkness came over the whole land
until three in the afternoon.
And at three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice,
“*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*”
which is translated,
“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
Some of the bystanders who heard it said,
“Look, he is calling Elijah.”
One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed
and gave it to him to drink saying,
“Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down.”
Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.
Here all kneel and pause for a short time.
The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom.
When the centurion who stood facing him
saw how he breathed his last he said,
“Truly this man was the Son of God!”
There were also women looking on from a distance.
Among them were Mary Magdalene,
Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joses, and Salome.
These women had followed him when he was in Galilee
and ministered to him.
There were also many other women
who had come up with him to Jerusalem.
When it was already evening,
since it was the day of preparation,
the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea,
a distinguished member of the council,
who was himself awaiting the kingdom of God,
came and courageously went to Pilate
and asked for the body of Jesus.
Pilate was amazed that he was already dead.
He summoned the centurion
and asked him if Jesus had already died.
And when he learned of it from the centurion,
he gave the body to Joseph.
Having bought a linen cloth, he took him down,
wrapped him in the linen cloth,
and laid him in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock.
Then he rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb.
Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses
watched where he was laid.

Exegesis

Isaiah 50:4-7

Our passage today is taken from *Deutero-Isaiah* or *Second Isaiah*. Our pericope is referred to as the third major servant song of Isaiah. The setting is the time of the Exile in Babylon. The plight of the Israelites spurs the yearning for the Messiah. This scripture has been chosen for Passion Sunday for obvious reasons. The details that parallel the Passion narrative are striking, especially considering that the words were written some 500 years before Christ. Like the prophets that came before, the suffering servant is being rejected by the people and treated harshly. Like Jesus his face is set like flint on the mission. This expression of a singularity of focus appears often in the prophetic tradition, e.g. Isaiah 48:4; Jer. 1:8, 18; Ezek. 3:8-9; Luke 9:51. Jesus' face is set like flint on Jerusalem. He is resolutely focused on the purpose for which He came into our world.

Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

This Psalm is on the lips of Jesus from the Cross. (Mk 15:34) In the oral society at the time of Jesus it was customary to memorize Sacred Scripture. It was also a regular practice to recite the first line of a Psalm and imply that the listener would continue the Psalm in its entirety in their own mind. It would be wise to take the time to read and meditate on the entire Psalm.

In ancient text Psalm 22 was entitled *The Prayer of an Innocent Person*. Jesus cries out from the Cross the words of the psalmist, "My God, My God why have you forsaken Me." The true passion is the experience of God forsakenness. It is the pain of separation from infinite love. Jesus travels to the depth of God forsakenness to save us. Real death is precisely this separation from the Father's love.

Philippians 2:6-11

In his first letter to the world, *God is Love*, Pope Benedict XVI points to the Cross of Jesus and says, "This is where the definition of love must begin." I certainly agree with that statement. In a similar vein I would point to the Cross and say, "This is where the definition of humility must begin." This is the ultimate act of humility in human history. At its deepest level pride says, "I do not need God." Humility is the polar opposite of pride and therefore humility is coming to understand our total dependence on God for our very existence. Jesus totally surrenders Himself into the arms of His Father.

Scholars believe that our scripture passage today is a common hymn of the early Church that predates St. Paul. It is believed that St. Paul is merely reciting the hymn to communicate his point. Paul is calling on the people of Corinth to put on the heart and mind of Christ. Chapter 2 is entitled, *Plea for Unity and Humility*. The hymn is set up by the immediately preceding verses. "Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each not looking out for his own interests, but everyone for those of others. Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God..." (Phil. 2:3-5)

Exegesis (Continued)

The word *form* in the original Greek is *morphe*. *Morphe* describes a mode of being, i.e. Jesus is divine. Our creed describes Jesus as being one substance with the Father. Yet, Jesus as an ultimate act of humility chose to be fully human without divine influence. He is God choosing to pour out His life for us, a total emptying. Psalm 22:15 describes it as follows: “Like water my life drains away...” In a similar vein Paul would later talk about being poured out like a libation. Even in death as the side of Jesus was pierced blood and water flowed from His side, total outpouring of life and love. St. Anselm would call this *the marvelous exchange*. He became totally human so that we might one day share divine life.

Mark 14:1—15:47

The Passion of our Lord is the soul of the Gospel. It is the heart of the Good News, that God so loved the world He gives us His only Son. The heart of the Old Testament is the covenantal relationship with God. The Israelites’ story is one of infidelity and a quest for atonement. They always seek the most unblemished lamb to sacrifice to God to atone for their sins. It is a constant struggle to pay a price that human beings could not pay. Rejecting God’s love is a grievance that we rightfully owe, yet it carries a price that we cannot pay. It is out of human reach. Only the sinless one, the one who owes nothing could pay the price for us. Note that there is no Lamb mentioned at the Last Supper Passover Meal. Jesus is the perfect unblemished Lamb of God.

It is important to keep in mind as we read the Passion that it is Jesus who willfully surrenders Himself to the Cross. It is for this hour that He came into our world. It is important that we look at the Last Supper and the Cross as one event in human history. The Body given up at the altar and blood poured out in the chalice cannot be separated from the Body lifted on the Cross and the Blood poured out in the passion. They are one and the same. At the altar of the Mass, we make present again both the Last Supper and the Cross of Calvary.

The word Passion connotes pain of the heart and soul. As excruciating as the physical suffering must have been for Jesus to endure, a much deeper pain is expressed in the pain of the soul, “My soul is sorrowful unto death.” It is the pain of betrayal and the separation from His Father’s love that Jesus will endure that is the real Passion.

In His Body given up and His blood poured out Jesus is pouring out His life for us. Blood represents life itself. Jesus proclaimed, “This is My blood of the covenant poured out for many.” The blood of the covenant alludes to Exodus 24:8 where Moses sprinkles the blood of the sacrifice on the people to re-unite them with God and with each other. The phrase *for many* is *hyper pollon* in Hebrew. As it appears in Isaiah 53:12 it means *for all*.

It is important to note that the name Barabbas is composed of two Hebrew/Aramaic words, *Bar* and *abba*. *Bar* means *son of* and *abba* means *father*, and so Barabbas means son of the father.

Exegesis (Continued)

Mark 14:1—15:47

Barabbas was released in place of Jesus. All of us are sons of the father and so we could conclude that we were released from bondage and death row. Jesus takes our place.

The death of Jesus was a cosmic event in human history. The world went dark from noon until 3 p.m. Some surmise that there may have been an eclipse of the sun or a sandstorm. I see it as more of an act of God, a fulfillment of Amos 8:9, “On that day, says the Lord, I will make the sun set at midday and cover the earth in darkness in broad daylight.”

“The temple veil was rent in two from top to bottom.” The underlying Greek word for rent is *eschisthe*. It means to tear violently as one would rip an old cloth in two with one powerful force. The temple veil was a huge curtain that separated the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctuary of the temple where the ark of the covenant resided. It was built by human hands as a barrier separating the people from God. No one was allowed to enter except the High Priest that was chosen to enter once per year to offer the sacrifice of atonement. It is symbolic of God crashing through the barriers of sin and death that once separated us from God. The barrier created by human hands is destroyed by God.

I always looked at this cosmic moment as the act of God opening the gates of Heaven so that we could now enter God’s presence. In recent years I have come to see this as also the opening of the font of God’s grace in a new way. I feel that God’s love is pouring on the world as a Niagara Falls of love and mercy flowing upon us from the pierced side of Christ. Jesus said: “Whoever believes in Me, as scripture says: Rivers of living water will flow from within him.” (Jn 7:38)

Reflection

This weekend we commemorate the Passion of our Lord. The very word “passion” connotes a pain or an agony of the heart. As Jesus experiences the agony in the garden He exclaims, “My soul is sorrowful unto death.” (Mk 14:34) As painful as the physical crucifixion must have been the pain of the denial, betrayal and abandonment must have been even more excruciating for Jesus.

We all have experienced the pain of being separated from a loved one because of death. My own family certainly has experienced this deep loss. I am sure that many of you have lost a spouse or a child or a close friend to the reality of death. The human finality of that, and the heartache that accompanies that loss can be overwhelming. The pain of that separation can be immobilizing.

It seems that just yesterday we celebrated the wonder of Christmas and the coming of our Emmanuel, God with us. Jesus was born into our human condition. He walked into the waters of the Jordan River in deep solidarity with us. He becomes one of us in all things but sin. He must share in all things including death, even death on a cross. Jesus travels to the depth of God forsakenness for us. From the agony of the cross he cries out, “My God, My God why have you forsaken Me.” (Mk 15:34) In the ancient Creed of the Church, Christians proclaimed, “He descended to the depth of hell.” Jesus goes to the depth of God forsakenness for us. He experiences real death, separation from His father’s love. He becomes separated from the life-giving breath of His Father. He, though whom all things came into being, ceases to be! He humbles Himself to save us.

From the cross He could hear the bystanders jeer, “Save yourself and come down from the cross.” (Mk 15:30) The chief priests and the scribes mocked him, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself.” (Mk 15:31) He did not come into the world to save Himself. He came to save us! He who was without sin had no need of salvation. We sinners need a savior. Out of love for us and in obedience to the Father, Jesus remained on the cross, fastened with nails and hatred, but held there by love. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that those who believe in Him might not perish but might have eternal life.” (Jn 3:16) He humbled Himself to share in our humanity so that we may share in His divinity. We look back at the cross from the vantage point of the empty tomb and we give thanks, and we remember.

At the moment of His death the temple veil was torn from top to bottom. That which once separated us from God is destroyed forever. After three days of darkness and separation, God breathed His life breath back into His Son. The Spirit that Jesus surrendered from the cross now raises Him from the dead. Jesus breathed that Spirit on the apostles in the upper room that first Easter Sunday evening and poured it upon the Church at Pentecost. The same Spirit is now with us, the Lord and giver of Life. Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of us Your faithful and enkindle in us the fire of Your love.

Yours in Christ,



Personal Witness

I was raised in a very devout Catholic home. The Crucifix of Jesus was everywhere including over the head of my bed. We prayed the rosary as a family and so I held the Crucifix in my hand as a very small child. In our parish there remains today a very large and graphic Crucifix over the altar. It was on the wall of our classroom in school. Jesus on the cross was very familiar to me, maybe too familiar. It was close yet it seemed something of the distant past in a far and away land.

As I reflect on my relationship with the Crucified Lord over the years I can identify two very significant spiritual awakenings. The first occurred when I was in my early thirties, before priesthood was even on my mind. I had recently lost a very close friend in an automobile accident and that sent me searching for answers. It was the middle of lent and I was drawn to a parish mission. The mission was being directed by three Franciscan Priests of the order of St. Maximillian Kolbe. I heard the story of Fr. Kolbe in very gruesome detail for the first time. Fr. Kolbe was the prisoner at Auschwitz that stepped forward and took another prisoner's place in the starvation bunker. The priest pointed to the crucifix over the altar while looking directly at me and said: "Did not Jesus do the same for you, did he not take your place, did he not die for you?" I literally moved from a sitting position to kneeling and as I did that the entire congregation followed. For the first time in my life the Cross became personal! As I fell to my knees in thanksgiving, I felt this incredible regret that I had never thanked Jesus for taking my place, for taking away my sins, for dying for me.

As it were that following Holy Thursday, I was invited to have my feet washed during the Mass. I thought of an excuse and declined the invitation. As I listened to the Gospel that evening the words took on new meaning for me. Peter too at first refused to allow Jesus to wash his feet. Jesus replied, "Unless you allow me to wash your feet you will have no inheritance with me." In my head I translated that: unless you allow me to love you, unless you allow me to wash away your sins you will not share eternal life with me. This gift of salvation must become personal for each of us. Jesus is pouring out His life for us. We must except the gift. In his Catechism Saint John Chrysostom writes: "The soldier pierced the Lord's side, he breached the wall of the sacred temple, and I have found a treasure and I have made that treasure my own." Each one of us must make that treasure our own. The Cross must become personal.

The second major spiritual awakening that I had came during my seminary years. As we were studying the Gospel of John and covering the famous passage John 3:16, the professor was making a case that the word *gave* should be translated *gives*, *i.e.*, "God so loved the world that He *gives* His only begotten Son." He argued that the verb was active and not past tense. He also argued that the gift of God's life and love is an ongoing, every present and never-ending reality. He pointed to the Eucharist where we make present again the one sacrifice of Calvary, where His body is given up and His blood poured out. Then he pointed to all the sacraments of the Church where God's grace and mercy flows upon us.

As my personal relationship with Jesus has evolved over the years so has my vision and experience of the crucifixion. It has moved from a distant historical event to an up close and personal gift of love. It has moved from an intellectual understanding to a personal experience of God's love. For that I am eternally grateful.

In Christ,

