

The Father

Good Friday 2020

Dear brothers and sisters, especially dear residents and the sick, today, Good Friday, I would like to ask myself a question that is often recurring these days: what is the meaning of everything that is happening to us? It is the same question we ask ourselves when we are faced with the pain of a loved one, especially an innocent one! I don't think that anyone can venture a convincing answer to this *because* not even Jesus in the Gospels, He who is the wisdom of the Father, has done so.

We know one thing for certain, however: God does not love human suffering, and if He does not suffer by nature, He always suffers by participation, just as a mother suffers to see her sick child in a hospital bed.

The cross of Christ which we solemnly adore today tells us precisely this truth: "*God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life*".

This long suffering of humanity is purifying us, it is helping us to discern between the truth and the fake, between love and hate, between what builds and what destroys. But the suffering of these days is also helping us to understand in a new way how great is the love of God for us, to what extent we are loved, He who died crucified so that all men may be freed from sin and its consequences.

Yes, "**Everything is learned at the foot of the cross**" – as Cottolengo loved to repeat, everything is learned from that divine chair where it is revealed to us what it means to love "to the end". On that one Good Friday where all of humanity's sufferings are gathered, distances appear as extreme as they are close: guilt and innocence, betrayal and grace, offence and forgiveness, distance and closeness, sinful humanity and redeeming divinity, abandonment and closeness, life and death, and even sadness and joy are faced in a battle that will have its conclusion on Easter morning.

Everything is learned at the foot of the cross because there we understand that God does not want the death of anyone and that for this very reason He has taken upon Himself the sin of man to the point of being crucified as a cursed, because cursed are those who hang from the cross, remember the Scriptures!

Dear friends, Jesus' answer to the question of the meaning of human suffering is not a saying, it is not a theory, but an action that led him to fight and overcome every enemy of humanity, the least of them death. The question of that " why " causal of suffering I was talking about at the beginning, by his love, has been transformed into a *final* "why": that all may be saved!

On this Good Friday I would like to share with you the words of a mystic of our time, the servant of God Chiara Lubich, who, facing the mystery of Christ crucified, humanly experiencing the abandonment of the Father and noting the pain of humanity, expresses herself in this way: "It would be dying if we did not look to You, my Love, who change, as if by magic, every bitterness into

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sweetness: to You, on the cross in Your Cry, in the highest suspension, in absolute inactivity, in living death, when, in the cold, You threw all Your Fire on earth and, in the infinite stasis, You threw Your infinite life to us, who now live it in inebriation.

And this is enough for me: to see myself like You, at least a little, and to unite my sorrow to yours and offer it to the Father, and to remain certain that never - as in these hours - so much Light walks in this world and so much Fire.

That we might have the Light, you went blind. That we might have unity, you felt the separation from the Father. That we might possess Wisdom, you became “ignorant”.

In order to clothe ourselves with innocence, you made yourself “sin”.

For God to be in us, you proved Him far from You. That Heaven might be ours, you felt Hell.

To give us a happy stay on earth, among a hundred brothers and more, you were ousted from Heaven and earth, men and nature. You are God, you are my God, *our* God of infinite love.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us also try to repeat in faith: “It is enough for us, Lord, to see ourselves like You”, let us try, with God's help, not to waste any of those tears which in these days are abundant on so many faces, but to unite them to His for the salvation of the world. He who is innocent, we sinners, together we can ensure that this terrible Good Friday of humanity is not wasted but becomes the way to that definitive Resurrection which God wants to give to all men.

We have a teacher, the Mother of God! How can we fail to see in Her all those who are close to the crucified of our time, the many care and health workers who have truly given their lives! How can we fail to see in this icon the Little House and its mission!

Stabat mater sorrowful, powerless, as so often happens to us, but present until the Son will say: “Everything is fulfilled!” Mother of God and our Mother: intercede for us so that God may increase our faith, strengthen our Hope and make us sharers in His charity. Amen!

Father Carmine Arice