

February 15, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

In Lent, we follow the story of Jesus as he is on the road to Jerusalem where he will experience his passion and crucifixion. The events in the story of Jesus' passion and crucifixion are clearly the results of human envy, intrigue and the manipulation of others by those in positions of power and influence. But through it all, even as carefully manipulated events fall into place, God's hand can be seen working through the events so carefully orchestrated by others. We are being taught that yes, human beings can, and often do, act for reasons of selfishness, envy, greed, power, revenge, carelessness, fear, and apathy. Those in power do indeed often manipulate people and events to benefit themselves and their political, economic, or social plans. Often, it is true, that you and I, and our families, friends, and neighbors, are caught up in and affected by the schemes, plans, actions and attitudes of others, some times without even realizing just how much we are being affected. Just as God's hand was at work in the events of Jesus' passion and crucifixion, so to God's hand is still at work in the world about us. God's activity does not necessarily thwart or stop the plans and actions of those in power or those who may mean to harm us, the Church, or our society but, rather God's activity often works through the events of life. Jesus had to walk the way of the cross and endure his passion and God walked with him. Just as God walks with us in life. But, notice it was not only one walker! God the Father walked with Jesus, but Jesus also had to walk with the Father. Jesus promised to be with us and to walk with us through life. We also have to walk with him. Individuals, families, societies and the Church also experience their times of Lent and Holy Week, their passion and crucifixion moments. But just as walking with the Father lead Jesus through his passion and cross to the glory of the Resurrection, so to for us! Walking the way of the cross with Jesus, will lead us, our families, our society, and the Church through to times of passion and crucifixion into the glory of Resurrection!

Enclosed please find The Way of the Cross pamphlet. Use this devotion to walk the way of the passion, the Via Dolorosa (the way of sorrow), with Jesus during this season of Lent. Meditate on the actions by which our Divine Savior accomplished redemption for us and the whole world. Unite yourself spiritually with him in the moments of his passion. May your spirits be strengthened to find his presence in all aspects of life, even suffering that you may be raised to joy when you find him also with you in times of new life and resurrection. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday reminding us that "we are dust, and unto dust shalt we return." It ends with Easter promising us that this dust will be raised as something new and glorious! If your heart is where your treasure is, then how blessed we are because God's heart is with us.... we are then His treasure! Perhaps it is time we starting treating ourselves and our brothers and sisters in Christ as God's treasures.

Blessings for Lent and Joys for Easter,
Fr. Phil