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Good Friday Homily
Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

April 18, 2014

We come back to the “School of Love” and continue the liturgy of last night. Today, the washing of the feet of the disciples is brought to its fullest meaning – and to a conclusion. The act of love of yesterday is most fully expressed in the “School of Love” today on Calvary. Jesus stretching out his arms on the cross reveals his covenant love with us, a *“love that gives, a love more powerful than betrayal, grace stronger than sin.”*

Pope Francis wrote that “the memory of the cross could be called the domain of Christian existence.” So it is good that we **are** here! To remember! To be drawn once again into this great act of love.

We heard in the Passion of our Lord, *“After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I thirst.””*

Perhaps Jesus did thirst from this great torment. But everything that Jesus said had deeper meaning. Perhaps he was thirsting for something more than a drink. Perhaps he was thirsting for the faith of those for whom he was giving up his life.

The cross of Jesus is the place where you and I are invited to LIVE most deeply. It is here, united with Jesus, where we are most loved and cherished. In fact, it was from the cross that Jesus “thirsted” for us.

Today, I want to lead us all into a meditation written by Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. It will give clear focus for why we have gathered today. I invite you to sit comfortably and close your eyes if you wish and allow these words to penetrate your heart and to receive deeply this invitation.

I Thirst for You

It is true. I stand at the door of your heart, day and night. Even when you are not listening, even when you doubt it could be Me, I am there. I await even the smallest sign of your response, even the least whispered invitation that will allow Me to enter.

And I want you to know that whenever you invite Me, I do come – always, without fail. Silent and unseen, I come, but with infinite power and love, and bringing the many gifts of My Spirit. I come with My mercy, with My desire to forgive and heal you, and with a love for you beyond your comprehension – a love every bit as great as the love I have received from the Father (“As much as the Father has loved me, I have loved you...” (Jn. 15:10) I come - longing to console you and give you strength, to lift you up and bind all your wounds. I bring you My light, to dispel your darkness and all your doubts. I come with My power, that I might carry you and all your burdens; with My grace, to touch your heart and transform your life; and My peace I give to still your soul.

I know you through and through. I know everything about you. The very hairs of your head I have numbered. Nothing in your life is unimportant to Me. I have followed you through the years, and I have always loved you – even in your wanderings. I know every one of your problems. I know your needs and your worries.

And yes, I know all your sins. But I tell you again that I love you – not for what you have or haven't done – I love you for you, for the beauty and dignity My Father gave you by creating you in His own image. It is a dignity you have often forgotten, a beauty you have tarnished by sin. But I love you as you are, and I have shed My Blood to win you back. If you only ask Me with faith, My grace will touch all that needs changing in your life, and I will give you the strength to free yourself from sin and all its destructive power.

I know what is in your heart – I know your loneliness and all your hurts – the rejections, the judgments, the humiliations, I carried it all before you. And I carried it all for you, so you might share My strength and victory. I know especially your need for love – how you are thirsting to be loved and cherished. But how often have you thirsted in vain, by seeking that love selfishly, striving to fill the emptiness inside you with passing pleasures – with the even greater emptiness of sin. Do you thirst for love? "Come to Me all you who thirst..." (Jn. 7: 37).

I will satisfy you and fill you. Do you thirst to be cherished? I cherish you more than you can imagine – to the point of dying on a cross for you.

I Thirst for You. Yes, that is the only way to even begin to describe My love for you. I THIRST FOR YOU. I thirst to love you and to be loved by you – that is how precious you are to Me. I THIRST FOR YOU. Come to Me, and I will fill your heart and heal your wounds. I will make you a new creation, and give you peace, even in all your trials. I THIRST FOR YOU. You must never doubt My mercy, My acceptance of you, My desire to forgive, My longing to bless you and live My life in you. I THIRST FOR YOU. If you feel unimportant in the eyes of the world, that matters not at all. For Me, there is no one any more important in the entire world than you. I THIRST FOR YOU. Open to Me, come to Me, thirst for Me, give me your life – and I will prove to you how important you are to My Heart.

Don't you realize that My Father already has a perfect plan to transform your life, beginning from this moment? Trust in Me. Ask Me every day to enter and take charge of your life. – and I will. I promise you before My Father in heaven that I will work miracles in your life. Why would I do this? Because I THIRST FOR YOU. All I ask of you is that you entrust yourself to Me completely. I will do all the rest.

Even now I behold the place My Father has prepared for you in My Kingdom. Remember that you are a pilgrim in this life, on a journey home. Sin can never satisfy you, or bring the peace you seek. All that you have sought outside of Me has only left you more empty, so do not cling to the things of this life.

Above all, do not run from Me when you fall. Come to Me – without delay. When you give Me your sins, you give Me the joy of being your Savior. There is nothing I cannot forgive and heal; so come now, and unburden your soul.

No matter how far you may wander, no matter how often you forget Me, no matter how many crosses you may bear in this life; there is one thing I want you to always remember, one thing that will never change. I THIRST FOR YOU – just as you are. **You don't need to change to believe in My love, for it will be your belief in My love that will change you.** You forget Me, and yet I am seeking you every moment of the day – standing at the door of your heart and knocking. Do you find this hard to believe? Then look at the cross, look at My Heart that was pierced for you. Have you not understood My cross? Then listen again to the words I spoke there – for they tell you clearly why I endured all this for you: "I THIRST..."(Jn 19: 28).

Yes, I thirst for you – as the rest of the psalm verse I was praying says of Me: "I looked for love, and I found none..." (Ps. 69: 20). All your life I have been looking for your love – I have never stopped seeking to love you and be loved by you. You have tried many other things in your search for happiness; why not try opening your heart to Me, right now, more than you ever have before.

Whenever you do open the door of your heart, whenever you come close enough, you will hear Me say to you again and again, not in mere human words but in spirit. "No matter what you have done, I love you for your own sake. Come to Me with your misery and your sins, with your troubles and needs, and with all your longing to be loved. I stand at the door of your heart and knock. Open to Me, for I THIRST FOR YOU..." ✠

My dear friends, this is why we are here today.