

5th Sunday of Lent
March 29, 2009

The Gospel passage today is a challenge to all of us to imitate the complete faith of Jesus. Using a common saying of the time, "Unless the grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit," Jesus applies it to Himself and His approaching death. He comes to realize that, as much as He loves life and uses it well in the service of others, His death will be even more beneficial to the world's salvation. Despite His very human anxiety and fear, Jesus trusts in His Father's will and His Father's plan.

Jesus acknowledges that He is troubled, even fearful, but does not let that get in the way of seeking His Father's will. He affirms, "Father, glorify your name," no matter the cost to Himself. His pure obedience will stymie the power of the evil one. His resurrection will be the proof of God's love and the unfolding of God's plan for our sharing in eternal life.

We are called to imitate the trust of Jesus. No matter what is happening in our lives, no matter how troubled we are at times, God is working all things to the good of those who keep faith. What seems like death or doom to us is already being fashioned into a new beginning, a deeper entry into the mystery of God's love and a further unfolding of His gracious plan. Like Jesus, we are to trust in God's love more than in our own limited vision. The kingdom of God is coming, is, in fact, already in our midst. The suffering of Jesus was very real, and He wished it could have been avoided. But the suffering never caused Jesus to doubt that the Father had a loving plan to raise His Son to His presence and all believers with Him.

In our all too real suffering we also cling to faith. The death pangs over which we agonize are growing pains. We are being birthed into a new life we cannot see clearly just yet.

God bless you.

Fr. Pat