

Let us pray. Holy God guide us on this sacred day. May we find moments of stillness, reflection, and truth... Amen.

This past week has been a very intense Holy Week...

Since Saturday, I have been up at the hospital every single day... Visiting with multiple parishioners, and my granny happens to be one of them...

And trying to do sermon prep on the crucifixion of Christ in the hospital, and in very uncertain circumstances, has almost been an out of body experience for me...

I was able to set up a make-shift desk area in the corner of the ICU waiting room...

While there, I overheard a lot of hard conversations, heartbreaking news, and hard decisions...

I watched tears and fear cross people's faces and consume their bodies...

And if I am being honest, this also happened to me, a few times this week...

Which lead me to wonder about the original Holy Friday... And specifically, the parts of the gospel that were not recorded...

For example, how did those who loved Jesus experience these horrific events first hand?

Those who would have done anything in their power to stop what was already in motion...

Which is a feeling that even 2000 years later, we can all relate to.... Because each one of you has experienced a time when you would have done anything to stop what was in motion.

Especially when awful things are happening. Or when heartbreaking things are happening to your loved ones.

When the very world around you is being consumed, leaving you with your head spinning.

And so, you try and grasp at what you can. You try to make sense of what is happening...

Maybe you reason, plead, or pray for a way out...

And sometimes, slowly, things get better... and your loved ones get better...

But sometimes they do not...

And it can be so tempting in this sacred space to try and find a reason behind what has happened.

But so often, there is no reason behind it.

So often life is hard and unfair.

And all we can do is witness what is going on and sit in the aftermath of it all...

Which is a place that we do not like to be, because we are Easter people, we want hope, joy, and love...

But sitting in the aftermath, or sitting in the turmoil of life is not fun... In fact, it is downright painful.

And sitting in those spaces is like dwelling in Good Friday or Holy Saturday... Two days we would rather rush through than embrace.

But it is here on Good Friday, and it is here in your times of hurt, heartache, and heartbreak that God is still present...

Even though God is dead in the body of Christ... God still remains in the presence of the Holy Spirit....

And we know this to be true, because in Christ's death the Holy Spirit was poured out...

Words that we witnessed today in our long gospel reading...

As it was after Jesus' death and while he was still on the cross, that a soldier pierced his side, and we are told that both blood and water came out.

And water, as we all know, is a sign of the Holy Spirit.

And water was a very important part of Jesus' ministry, especially in the gospel of John...

For example, in the gospel of John, Jesus turns water into wine...

Then Jesus tells Nicodemus that no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit...

Then Jesus meets the woman at the well, sharing that he is living water, water that gushes up to eternal life.

Then Jesus heals a sick man in the waters of Bethesda.

Then Jesus walks on water.

And from our gospel last night, Jesus poured water into a basin and washed his disciples' feet.

And it is in the water and the words spoken at our baptism that we are united in Christ's death and resurrection.

Showing that it was no mistake that water was present in Christ's death...

Water that came pouring out his very body...

Which becomes a visual sign that in death, Christ springs fourth life, because water is necessary for all of life and water sustains all life...

Further, in death, Christ pours out the Holy Spirit into all of creation.

As this was a visual sign to show that the Holy Spirit remains with us...

That from Christ's very body the Holy Spirit is entangled in God's new creation.

In the aftermath of trauma, death, and pain, it is the Spirit that remains.

And it is the Spirit who intercedes for us when we pray...

And it is the Spirit who breathes with us when we breathe...

And it is the Spirit who meets us in our times of trial, in our darkest valleys, in our fears and in our tears...

Because it was the spirit who was poured out beneath the cross of Jesus...

And it is the Spirit who meets you beneath your own cross and all that you have to bear.

Because it is the Spirit who tethers us to the life and ministry of Jesus.

Who may not be able to take away your pain, or hurt, but who remains with you there.

And so, on this Holy Night, it is my prayer that you find peace in the Spirit that remains... And that you can lean into the abiding presence of the Spirit when you need it the most... Amen.