

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you O God my strength and my joy... Amen...

Yesterday I had the opportunity and the honor to walk alongside some very bright minds during our first communion class...

We talked about God's love, and how there is a place at God's table just for them...

And likewise, there is a place for each of YOU...

We talked about how great Jesus is, and how Jesus loves all kinds of people... Even the crabby people...

And we talked about what makes us crabby... Like being hungry, being sick, maybe our siblings, and one of my favorite answers... Waking up early...

And for you morning people, you might not agree with that last one... But for the rest of us, waking up early can indeed make a person crabby...

And my parents will tell you that, as a kid, I was a crabby morning person...

And I have a feeling that Jesus experienced this lack of sleep and crabbiness with his disciples too...

For example, today we heard Jesus ask his disciples, to stay awake...

But after a mere hour he found them sleeping, and thus needed to wake them up and remind them again to stay awake... A cycle that happened a couple more times...

And I can sympathize with the disciples... The grogginess they must have felt... The crabbiness of being woken up from sleep... multiple times... And also, how defeated they must have felt, being mad at themselves that they could not stay awake...

And as we enter Holy Week, I think that this reminder to stay awake is so important.

Not in the physical sense of staying awake for the entire week... But this is week that we need to be awake for...

Because this is a week that we need to pay attention to... By not simply rushing to Easter...

A week that is also hard, because it calls us to pay attention to the spaces of humanity that are not so pleasant...

A week that calls us to stay awake to all of the things Jesus experienced so many years ago.

Where Jesus was betrayed, denied, and mocked. Where Jesus was led to his very death on the cross.

This is a week that highlights the not so pleasant imagery of Jesus' ministry... A week that brings into full light how cruel people can be....

While at the same time, this is a week, that is all about forgiveness and love...

Forgiveness and love for the crabby people, and for all people.

Because God's forgiveness and love is for all people.

And so, it is my prayer that this week, you are able to stay awake to this complex and yet simple truth...

As we live in a world where brokenness is real.

While at the same time we are held in our entirety and in our brokenness in the everlasting arms of Jesus...

Because these are the arms that have embraced every single experience you have ever had and will have...

Arms that do not tire nor sleep... So that you can sleep, and find peace and rest...

Arms that pick up your burdens and whatever it is that stresses you out, so that you do not need to carry them alone...

Arms that love you and hold you in God's embrace... Because these arms are infinite and there is a place, just for you... Amen.