

FIRST FRIDAY HOLY HALF HOUR for 2nd March, 2018

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

(Silence – atleast 2 mins)

HYMN: Joyful Celebration 47–At the name of Jesus or any suitable hymn

LEADER:As we gather here on this First Friday in Lent, we seek to understand the purpose of the incarnation and subsequent crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through ages, the Father kept enlightening us with His wisdom that we may bear the fruits of the Kingdom of Heaven. Slow to understanding the beauty of his plan for his people, He sends down His only beloved son - “They will respect my son”.

PRAYER:

*How many times each day
do You come to me, Jesus?
How many quiet prophets,
how many whispered warnings
are sent to catch my attention?*

*And how many times do I pass by
unaware of Your calm Presence,
unaware of Your beckoning gaze?*

Grant us Lord the grace
To never neglect our agents of care and love
To see you present in every advise we get
Teach us to trust in your Divine Wisdom and surrender our lives to You.

(Prayer words in italics are excerpts from a poem)

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 21:33-43, 45-46

REFLECTION:

Most of us prefer to live on the human wisdom of our own thoughts and take our own personal decisions in our own interest. The ways of Christ are either too difficult or not worthy the walk of self-sacrifice. Just like the tenants, we shun all the prophets who come from the Father and when the Son himself intervenes we block him completely.

Is it our pride and our selfishness that make us less receptive of God?

(Silence)

The parable also strikes forth as an allegory. The landowner does everything possible to yield the desired fruits that will flourish the lives of those who tend to it. He plants a vineyard, fences it, digs a wine press and also installs a watch tower - just like our Heavenly Father who prepares a way from us from the moment of our conception. The Tenants like the Jews fail to respect the many prophets who come to foretell the plans of salvation to the point of killing the Son. The Stone the builders rejected became the cornerstone. The Jews rejected the Son who would be the Holy One. The account of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection was the original focus for Matthew – This was the Lord's doing already foretold by Isaiah and amazing in their eyes. The Son was thrown out and killed and yet there has been no revenge but a divine love that blooms reconciliation. The fruits are indeed produced bountiful when the vineyard is leased to those to cherish the fruits of the Kingdom.

Are we sensitive to what God desires from us? What fruits do I produce for God to be a worthy cultivator of His Kingdom?

(Silence)

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL:

Leader: His Mercy is never ceasing and His plan to redeem us untiring. Through our Redeemer, we bring forth our petitions.

Res: Lord, hear our prayer

1. That the Church led by Pope Francis, all religious and clergy may guide their flock to respect and trust in the teachings of the Church. For this we pray, ...
2. That we may be less pre-occupied by our own thoughts to save ourselves and rather bask in the promise and message set by Christ for our life. For this we pray...R/-
3. That we may always think the best for others and never seek to be revengeful. For this we pray...For this we pray...R/-
4. That our lives this Season of Lent may be well pleasing to God as we seek to follow the footsteps of Christ - difficult as it may seem. For this we pray...R/-

Leader: Almighty God, we give thanks that you loved us enough to come to us, to send your Son, our Savior, Jesus, to speak the truth to us, to show us the way of life, to call disciples, and to seek and to save us. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

CONCLUDING PRAYER:

Dear God, open our eyes and hearts that we may see and feel your incessant, unconditional love for each of us. Tame our minds to be won over by Your Divine Love that we may share it in word and deed with everyone we meet. You do everything possible to win back your wayward people and Your Love knows no reason, no debate until the point of risking rejection and death. We are bold this day even to give thanks for loving us enough to hold us accountable, to judge us, to show us the error of our ways. May you continue to entrust us with values that mould us, be patient in our times of failure and forgive all our weakness and iniquity. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

BENEDICTION:

FINAL HYMN: Joyful Celebration 395 – The Steadfast love of the Lord never ceases or any suitable hymn

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