

Palm Sunday – Fr. Val Handwerker

April 9, 2017

Cathedral

5:00 and Noon

At Gethsemane, in the garden, Jesus fell on his face and prayed a single prayer—three times, **“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.”**

“My Father...” he prays.

Less than a day later, in fact Jesus has drunk of the cup of suffering to its very dregs, and his last words of prayer before he dies on the cross, sandwiched between two screams, his final prayer, **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”**

In the abyss of darkness, Jesus questions the silence of his Father. On the threshold of defeat, Jesus wonders why his Father didn't take the cup of suffering away...why his Father isn't with him.

Sisters and brothers: Nowhere else in the Gospels does Jesus ever call his Father “God.” Taking his last mortal breath, the Word made flesh collapses into a cry for a missing God (1).

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

The four Gospels give us four different angles from which to gaze upon the crucified Jesus. They give us four perspectives to see him in a different light, depending where we stand before the cross. And, you know: For those of us who've ever been on the verge of despair in life...For any of us who've ever felt cheated in life, or alone in our suffering...oh, Friends, we can stare at that Jesus given us in today's passion story.

We can then bring what's in our cup of suffering and share it with Jesus' cup.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Sometimes we need to stare lovingly at our Savior from that vantage point.

(1) See Raymond E. Brown, S.S., *A Crucified Christ in Holy Week: Essays on the Four Gospel Passion Narratives* (Collegeville, Minnesota: 1986), pp. 43-44. See also his book, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave*, volume 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1994), pp. 1044-51.

