



Homily – Good Friday 2011 (A)ⁱ

*The Most Rev. José H. Gomez
Archbishop of Los Angeles*

*Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels
April 22, 2011*

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In the Gospel we have just heard, our Lord Jesus Christ tells us: “It is finished.”

The work of our redemption has been accomplished. Jesus has given his life for us — to the last drop of his blood, for each one of us.

When we look at Jesus Christ on his cross, we see how much God loves each one of us.

God’s love for us — for each one of us — is personal. He loves *you*. He loves *me*. He loves each of us as if we were the only one.

He gave himself up on the cross for you and for me, and for all men and all women for all time.

In today’s first reading the prophet Isaiah tells us the same thing: He has poured himself out. He has been wounded for our transgressions. He has made himself an offering for our sins.

Through his Holy Cross, Jesus has redeemed the world!

If we believe in his cross, my brothers and sisters, we will not perish but have eternal life. If we believe in his cross, we will know the power of his resurrection.

So, my brothers and sisters: Let us believe in the power of his cross!

The second reading today from the Letter to the Hebrews tells us: He was made one of us — like us in all things except sin.ⁱⁱ

So Jesus Christ knows what it means to be human. He knows it from the inside. He has lived a totally human life, from the womb to the tomb. From the cradle to the cross, he shared our humanity.

He knew the joys of family love with Mary and Joseph. He knew what it was like to live as an immigrant, when the Holy Family was in exile in Egypt. He worked with his hands. He thought about things and made choices as we all do. He knew hunger and thirst, as we just heard, and loneliness and tiredness.

He had friends like we have. He wept when Lazarus died. He was joyful and prayerful. And, as we remember in these days of Holy Week, he knew pain and suffering in the same way that we do.

He endured all this so that he could make a perfect offering of himself for our sins. He bore the sins of many to make intercession for us with God as our heavenly high priest.

So because Jesus knows our humanity, he can sympathize with us in our weakness. And so, we can go confidently to his heavenly throne and seek his grace.

I wanted to share with you today, that I chose my episcopal motto from this passage from the Letter to the Hebrews.

Adeamus cum fiducia ad thronum gratiae. “Let us go forth with confidence to the throne of grace.”

Because this is, my brothers and sisters, the joyful message of this Good Friday. Salvation has been won for us!

Our Lord Jesus Christ has paid the price of our redemption. This is the message of the cross.

It is not something negative. It is the victory of the Cross. It is God who loves us so much, that God the Father gave his only Son as a redemption for each one of us.

So today, let us feel, let us understand, and let us reflect on how much God loves us.

And then, naturally, our hearts must be moved to sorrow and gratitude to God.

Let us make this a moment where we can personally receive God’s love. And let us ask him for the grace to be able to correspond to his love: “Let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.”

Let us open our hearts to feel the suffering of Christ that he endured for each one of us. Let us begin again to love him. He has given his life for us! We must begin again today to give our lives for him.

This is the story of our lives: to begin, and to begin again.

Good Friday is an end — an end to death; an end to our old selves and our old selfishness. And Easter Sunday will be a new beginning — the beginning of a new and unspeakable joy for each one of us.

So today, let us ask Mary, our Blessed Mother — who was there, present at that sad and solemn moment, the moment of victory of the cross of Christ. She was there at the foot of the cross with her son. Let us ask her today to help us renew our desire to accompany Jesus on his cross.

My brothers and sisters, if we stay close to him and to his Mother on this Good Friday, we can have certainty that we will be with him when the stone is rolled away and his tomb is found empty on Easter Sunday!

ⁱ Readings: Isa. 52:13–53:12; Ps. 32:2, 6, 12–13, 15–17, 25; Heb. 4:14–16; 5:7–9; John 18:1–19:42.

ⁱⁱ See Matt. 21:18; Mark 2:23–26; John 4:6–7; 19:28; Luke 9:58; *Catechism*, 521, 544; Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, 22.