

Good Friday

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(May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be always acceptable in thy sight, O lord, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.)

Good Friday...

What's so "good" about it?

You wait around for someone to die...hoping, praying that death will come to take away the pain.

And what's with "Blessed are they that mourn"
(or, as in another translation, "Happy are they that mourn")?

Most of us have experienced the grief of losing a loved one. It's not fun...and certainly not a "happy" occasion. I'm sure there are those in today's parish...in our own families...who, if they were to leave now, would be mourned, leaving us angry and crying out in that anger to the Lord.

Perhaps it's because those who are "mourned the most" seem to be those who have "loved" the most. They're the people who have kept us together, fed us, cared for us, and taught us...as best they could...the true meaning of loving and serving others.

In the case of the church, they've chaired the same committee year after year, counted our offerings week after week, cooked our church dinners, served us coffee, and washed the dishes long after we'd gone home.

They have provided a place where we can meet, talk, and become friends, have planned our worship services, provided us with music, flowers, sacraments, and sermons.

They've even taught our children...and ourselves...about God.

And what's truly amazing is that they've taken the time to do all these things when they could have used it to...rest, eat, be with their families, take a trip, or...generally...enjoy the "good life" as defined by this world's concept of the word *good*.

They have been our faithful servants. And their leaving causes the order in our lives to be thrown into chaos.

We may not call it a "good" thing, but is their leaving "bad"?

Painful? Yes!

But, *bad*?

It all depends on our perspectives, I guess...how we look at Life. But how should I look at this day?

I was sitting in church, thinking about this dilemma, when the Lord suggested that I look for a common thread in the concepts of

a black hole, a clean room, and...Good Friday.

The black hole and this day of mourning seemed fairly easy.

I would guess that each of us has experienced emptiness: the void that occurs when a familiar routine is ended, the emptiness of heart and soul when a loved one has died.

It's fairly easy to see the connection between that kind of feeling and...today;

just as it's easy to see the connection between a black hole that sucks the very light out of the universe and a death that took the very hope out of Jesus' followers.

Death and black holes create voids.

But, what about the clean room?

Have you ever noticed that the cleaner a room is, the emptier it seems; and the emptier it seems, the more likely it is to attract children?

In fact, when our kids were little, a clean room didn't last very long. Invariably, it was the place that the children decided to play their games, or roller skate, or set up their train set...

After all, a clean room had space.

Children are drawn into clean rooms as surely as **matter is drawn into voids**...because until something is empty, it can't be filled with anything else.

My mother used to call our house "organized chaos," and I suppose it was.

The cleaning and messing up seemed to occur almost simultaneously.

But children do not set out to make messes; they love to start things, play things, learn things. They are drawn into an area void of clutter because it is a place where they can experiment...DO things. And in the excitement of possibilities, they hop from one thing to another.

Each piece of a puzzle that's "cast down" starts the possibility of another game.

To adults, it might appear as a room...another room...in ruins. A cleaning effort destroyed...and in rather short order, I might add. But, when we look at this room, from whose perspective do we see it?

And what do we really see as being "cast down"? All our hard work?...Or **the messiness that signifies the beginning of another game?**

In some ways, we see Jesus as coming into this world and cleaning it up...and perhaps He did. But He did not leave it orderly. Life, after all, isn't always neat. Life IS!

More than once, Jesus taught us that things aren't always as they seem.

The old world certainly had its order...The Romans saw to that.

And the Jewish law made a big deal out of "cleanliness": eat this; don't eat that; and for gosh sakes, don't touch anything that isn't clean.

Not that "cleanliness" is "bad." But "emptiness"...now that's a different story.

It's not the room...or even the house...that's important;

"it's what's inside that counts." (How many times have you heard me say this?)

And the cleanliness that puts us close to God must also be filled with a sense of childlike PLAYFULNESS. We must turn and become like children before we can enter the Kingdom of God. We must look at this whole business from a child's perspective.

And suddenly, I began to understand what God wanted me to see:

The possibility that Jesus came into the world to put a bit of chaos into the sterility of our so-called "cleanliness" by starting a new game...

His game...

where He was both the player
and
a part of the game...a piece of the puzzle.

He chose not to leave the "rooms" of our souls the way they were...
not to leave us alone.

By allowing Himself to be "cast down" in the middle of all this "cleanliness," He started a whole new set of possibilities for the Children of Light.

Jesus' leaving may have seemed like a black hole...but the void that it left behind was one that had to be filled. If Jesus had stayed, there would have been no need for Peter, James, John, and the multitude of others to go out into the world and take on the job of being servants.

Christianity would not have taken form; this church would not be here for you, today; and you would not be able to carry on his work, by taking the place of each servant that leaves.

The importance in all of these things is the realizations that goings and comings occur simultaneously.

We may sometimes have trouble seeing this because we're often trapped inside of time. But...God is NOT!

"I am the beginning AND the ending,"

sayeth the Lord. A single point (think of it: the beginning and ending point) on the *Circle* of Life.

Therefore, the statement in the beatitudes,

"Happy you who mourn,"

is NOT an inconsistent statement, because they, too, are met as a single point in God.

Just as are black holes, a clean room, and Good Friday.

For, although Jesus was "cast down" and the Light was taken out of this world, He was also, and at the same time "cast down" as the first piece in a new game, a puzzle, and a mystery.

So, if I were you, I'd "Look Out World!" Because on this day, a new game is already afoot...and the Children of Light are already a part of the game!

Good Friday?

Yes!

A very good Friday, indeed!

Amen.