

A Short Teaching on Holy Darkness
by Deacon Gerry Palermo

Greetings on this Holy Saturday

No Eucharistic Readings Until Easter Vigil (references are Genesis, Jonah, Matthew, Romans)

Yesterday, Jesus was crucified, died, was buried, and wrapped in linen cloth and placed in a tomb. In the night to come, the hour known only to the Earth, Jesus is resurrected.

Since we live in time, this is known to us factually and historically. Jesus asks us, on this Holy Saturday, to enter into the Holy Darkness and to comprehend the Sign of Jonah (Matt 12:39).

Our Church interior is bare. The Altar unadorned. The statues and cross, covered. The Holy Water fonts empty. The Altar candle is unlit. We, in community, experience the darkness.

We, as individuals, are alone in our thoughts. We, as I, experience the Holy Darkness.

What is the sign of Jonah then? Vengeance. Retaliation. Reprisal. Jonah was full of vengeance.

Even after the storm at sea, the belly of the great fish, the conversion of Nineveh, even after the teaching of the bush... even after all that, Jonah remained Vengeful. To be blunt, even after Easter (He is Risen, indeed!) and all its promises... we have the tendency to remain... Vengeful.

How is this so? We first look at the sin of Adam, the original sin. For Adam, the sin was the lack of faith that God does indeed give him everything. Rather, in Adam's thinking, we must take by violence the fruitfulness of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

While Adam started the problem, we own the actual sin. The one we commit in common against one another every day. Vengeance. Once we brought to fruition the lack of faith in God's love, we then turn on one another, violently and jealously. 'Cain was angry and his countenance fell... Cain said to his brother, Abel, let us go out into the field'. So violent has man become that God had to 'put a mark on Cain (all of us)' to protect him from vengeance, and a seven fold vengeance to any that repeat Cain's murderous vengeful action. It was a violent time. Man entered into so much vengeance even Seth's son who is named Enosh (translated: man of death, of misery, of fragility) testifies to the violence.

At that time people began to invoke the name of the Lord (Gen 4:26b). What is God's response?

Passive Passivity. Death to death. Mercy and Healing. Jesus is in the belly of the great fish. Vengeance is mine, says the Lord... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Romans 12:19). Today enter the Holy Darkness of God. Pray today, you enter Passive Passivity. Bring death to revenge. Ask for the overcoming with Mercy and Healing. Today, become a Son.

Peace be with you.

Deacon Gerry