

I've fallen into the tradition to run this article every Psalm Sunday. It slipped to Easter this year due to 'extenuating' circumstances. It is a 'rerun'. Its theme is Easter, and it is so appropriate when it comes to Him, and His greatest miracle. May we always adore and worship Him in the Eucharist. After all, we are an Easter people. And father talks about 'breakthroughs'. This was certainly one. I wrote it while at Mayo Clinic, while sitting in a pew at St. Mary's Cathedral, which was attached to the hospital. I was in the cathedral every day from 4-6 PM for three weeks in October 2009. Mass was at 4 PM and lasted a half hour. I would spend the rest of the time and often way past 6 PM praying for everything I could.

On Top of the Blood

He was not a very bright man. Oh, he was intellectually smart enough in many ways, but he did not know many important things, like how to discern with inner peace.

He'd followed the Master from a distance for almost a year now. What made him come to this place on this day and during this stay in Jerusalem, he did not know.

It was a such a great sadness, a very great sadness, the greatest sadness known to him. He had known much sadness, like many, if not most of us, I suppose.

He watched as they hung him and killed him, the Master.

No longer would those words of hope come from that mouth, those words of love, those words that spoke 'faith', that seemed truer than any faith.

He stood there in the rain, oblivious to it and the fact it never ever rained this time of year.

He watched them take the Master down, as the day grew darker and darker. It wasn't long before the man was virtually alone, except for the bodies of the other people hung with the Master. No one took them down. It grew very dark. The only way he could see anything, was from the left over lightning, flashing periodically, illuminating all in eerie strobe-like fashion. The black sky, the brown ground, the sheen of water on everything, giving it all an iridescent and bluish glow like some ghoulis cast.

When he was sure no one was coming back he walked down from his vantage point and up the small rise to where they hung him. He stood there at the base of the tree not noticing the wetness on his face was not from rain but from his own tears. He sagged down to his knees at the foot of the tree and felt despair of a kind never known to him before, overpower him.

"Why would they do such a thing to a kind and gentle man?"

He never knew anyone kinder.

Soon he slumped over, first sitting on the hard rocky and clayish ground, now slippery like only mud made from clay is, eventually succumbing to the muck and the hardness and lying down. With his eyes now even with the ground he saw, through the flashes of electric sky light, that the muck was laced with dark red.

"His blood," he thought. "I am lying on his blood."

And he wept, wept and he wept, his tears mingling with the rain and the blood, the water and the blood. The never ending rain. "It seems like God Himself is crying..." was his last thought before the man fell into some sort of deep slumber on the very hard and rocky ground, slick sludgy clay and all.

When he woke the rain had stopped. It was clearly very early morning, the sun just starting to make its way over the distant steppes. He wasn't quite sure where he was. There was a faint memory of wet and hard rocks and very wet pasty mud underneath his body and mixed in with all his clothes, but what he felt under him was none of those things.

He lay, it seemed, on a bed of fresh cut cedar, spongy and soft and smelling oh so delightful. It was the smell he noticed first and then, as he opened his eyes, he saw that he was indeed lying on such a bed. The tree was still there but a bed of cedar now surrounded its base, and intermixed within the cedar were flowers wild of every kind and color and most of all, scent. Such incredibly beautiful smells!

He sat up and looked. As far as he could see the landscape was dotted with wildflowers, all arrayed in the beauty of Solomon and then some. Birds sang a symphony of ecstasy everywhere.

In the distance he saw a figure walking towards him. He wondered if he should get up quickly and move off. He was afraid being associated with the Master could lead to his own torture and even death.

The thing is... it was all too surreal and pleasant. Fear died in him. He waited for the figure to approach.

The figure, he thought it was a man, had on a hood, so he could not see his face, but he clearly headed straight for him.

All grew very quiet, the birds who were singing joyously seemed to hush in some sign of great respect.

The man sat transfixed, unable to take his eyes off the approaching figure.

The cloaked human came right up to him. Stood there for a second that seemed like year, such anticipation, such unknown thrill the man felt, then, reaching out its hand, the hooded one offered the man a hand up.

The man reached out and took the offered hand and as he rose, the figure took its other hand and threw off the hood.

And then, standing before him, eye to eye, the Master, laughed, a laughter of the purest Delight and it struck right through his heart and into his soul.

That man was never the same again.

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There are many of us here in this good little parish who have stories. That might just help or inspire even just one other of us. I would be glad to help anyone who wants their's told. I will do the writing, such as it is. Think about it. Cell, 360.515.6410. cc.substack@gmail.com