

The Third Sunday of Easter

By: Fr. Greg Ames

The essay was titled, “Hopelessly Devoted.” And that is exactly what he is. Michael Elliot is from England, and has always been a big soccer fan. And even when he has lived abroad, he follows carefully the Liverpool Football Club. It’s been going on for years, and he realized that being a fan of a sport—no matter what the sport—creates this vision of yourself, and your link to others. He writes, *We fans like to describe our passion in religious terms, as if the places our heroes play were secular cathedrals. It’s easy to see why. When you truly, deeply love a sports team, you give yourself up to something bigger than yourself, not just because your individuality is rendered insignificant in the mass of the crowd, but also because being a fan involves faith. No matter what its current form may be, your team is worthy of blind devotion. Belief is all.*

You are witnesses of these things.

The readings during the Easter Season focus us on what happened to that team of people we call the disciples. And they call us, this team of people we call the Church, to focus on what is happening for us. It is clear that Jesus wants us to be devoted, to give ourselves up to something bigger than ourselves. But not blind devotion; eyes wide open. You, each of you, is called to be not a fan of Jesus, but his witnesses. It involves more than standing on the sides cheering. To be a witness means a willingness to do what Jesus did, not in his whole life, but what he did in that room:

He stood in their midst The disciples were not only afraid that this was a ghost. They were afraid that if it really were Jesus, they were now in trouble. They ran away, they denied him, they doubted. But Jesus stands in their midst, greets them, talks to them, asks if they got anything to eat. It is a reminder that Jesus never stood on the sidelines. He was in the game, whether it was a winning moment or a terrible defeat. To be his witness means we stand in the midst. And the goal is not to do great things, to say smart words, but to simply enter every moment with the desire to bring peace.

He showed them his hands and his feet. He could have said look into my eyes, study my face, listen to my voice and you will know it is me. He didn’t. He showed them his wounds. This is touching to me, and very tender. If you are going to be a witness, then you have to believe that you find faith in your wounds. It is in the stupid choices, the failure to be kind, the addiction, the depression, the sins—that is where we recognize Jesus. I’m not really certain that perfect people even need Jesus. But wounded people, like Peter, like you, like me. We need him. Maybe our world, our church, our lives would not be such a mess, if we could say to people, show me your wounds, let me see your struggles, because that is where we will find Jesus.

Then he opened their minds. For the past week and a half, I have periodically heard a tapping at my window. When I hear it, I go from window to window, confused as to who is out there. There is never anything, until one day, when I thought I was losing my mind, I saw it. A bird—a cardinal actually—seeing its reflection. Throughout his life, Jesus is tapping away at the disciples minds: forgiveness, mercy, understanding, peace, love. And they would move from room to room not certain. And now in this moment—this room, they got it. They got it because they realize that they were the ones who needed forgiveness, mercy, understanding, peace, and love. As they received those things they needed, they figured it out; they were to tap on the lives of others and bring them these same gifts.

The work of Advent season is to prepare for the coming of Jesus. The work of the Christmas season is to realize Jesus shares our human life. The work of the Lenten Season is to reform our lives. And the work of the Easter season? It is to listen to that tapping. It is to open our minds. It is to believe that each of you must be a source of forgiveness, mercy, understanding, peace and love for someone else. You are, after all, witnesses of all these things.

READINGS OF THE WEEK

Acts 3:13-19 1 John 2:1-5 Luke 24:35-48

April 17, 2015

靈 修 生 活

必 須 受 苦， 纔 入 光 榮

張 春 申 神 父

聖史路加記錄的復活奧跡，有一個思念似乎非常吸引他，以致前後三次指點出來。當兩個穿著耀目衣服的人，向探墓的婦女報告喜訊時，他們說：人子必須被交付於罪人之手被釘在十字架上，並在第三日復活。耶穌自己與兩個門徒走向厄瑪烏途中時，也對他們說：默西亞不是必須受這些苦難，纔進入光榮嗎？今天的福音，復活的耶穌站在弟子中間時，又說：經上曾這樣記載：默西亞必須受苦，第三天要從死者中復活。路加三次在復活喜訊中，提出同樣一個思念，看來這為他是極為重要的道理，讓我們深入地分析一下。

這端道理既然與耶穌復活相連在一起，所以應當緊緊地視為來自天主的啓示，不是人間的經驗之談。事實上，我國俗語中有些相似的話。比如「吃得苦中苦，方為人上人」；「生於憂患，死於安樂」等等好像與「必須受苦，纔入光榮」非常接近。不過，我們立刻應糾正，中國俗語來自人間經驗，並沒有絕對保證。我們誰都看見過，吃得苦中苦的人，並沒有都為人上人，我們也不敢向人擔保生於憂患，一定死於安樂。普通而論，人間的經驗有些可靠，不過並不絕對正確。至於為基督信徒而論，由於耶穌基督的逾越奧跡，誰跟著祂受苦，一定進入光榮。祂死後的復活是絕對可靠的保證。路加再三強調這些道理，實際便是針對他的教友團體所說的。聖經學家認為路加是為一個相當貧困的教會，也許正在水深火熱中的團體，書寫福音，所以他特別提出同一思想，為鼓勵他們追隨基督受苦，一定會導致光榮。

但是這個重要思想，今天我們好像聽見很多人向它挑戰，說它是人民的鴉片啦，窮人的麻醉劑啦。那麼我們又不能不再問是否路加有意叫人在世上遭受痛苦，甚至遭受不正義時，裹足不前，忍氣吞聲地任人宰割呢？那也不然。首先，路加福音中的耶穌基督便是一個為貧窮人傳報喜訊的人。祂要釋放俘虜，使壓迫者獲得自由。足見祂是一個為正義、為自由奮鬥的人。其次耶穌也說：天國喜訊傳揚開來，人人都應奮勉進入。所以耶穌的宣講，不是窮人的鴉片，在痛苦中得到麻醉，等待死後升天，相反，祂要求人奮勉。

而且我們也應當問：究竟耶穌為什麼必須受苦？路加說：默西亞必須受苦；這不是一種宿命論，而是表示耶穌處在自己那樣的時代中，外有羅馬帝國的壓迫，內有猶太公議會的控制，祂的宣講生涯，必會遭受反對。不過，耶穌不顧一切，完成祂的使命。因此，我們基督信徒如果由於跟隨祂，堅持在這世界中，宣講耶穌的道理，按照祂的要求而生活，那麼也必須受苦。但是，這不是消極的忍氣吞聲，而是對惡勢力挑戰的殺身成仁，捨生取義。怎能說這是人民的鴉片呢？

當然在復活奧跡的光輝下，基督信徒對於苦難有了新的了解。耶穌向惡勢力挑戰所受的苦難，最後在天主的能力下，會得到勝利。天主使殺身成仁的耶穌，自死亡的領域中，進入永遠的生命；表示誰為了天國而奮勉，天主決不可能捨棄他的。

路加再三強調的信仰，不是為世世代代的基督徒充滿希望的保證嗎？今天千千萬萬正在為天國受苦的兄弟姊妹，不是因此而能繼續堅持嗎？默西亞必須受苦，纔能進入光榮。

摘自「妙音送長風」

本 週 讀 經

二 零 一 五 年 四 月 十 九 日

宗 3:13-19; 若一 2:1-15; 路 24:35-48