

The older you get, it doesn't always mean you're not a fool. If I have enough money, a smartphone, I can take care of myself. Your life depends entirely on someone else. Your days, your life -not in step with the world. Today, end of your year, the Church year. The most important day in the history of the world, the most important day of your life is precisely the Gospel text: Good Friday; bitter suffering, crucifixion of our God. The Lord has come to earth as a Man, to be a Sacrifice, died in your place.

Nothing more important for you than what happened on the day when God was hung, declared **it is finished**. Payment for your sin. Listen again to the Epistle. The staggering enormity of what transpired for you, for the world, **we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins, to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace by blood of His cross**. All things reconciled. All things made right again in Him who defeated your sin, your death by His death, who lives and reigns your King that you will live and reign with Him.

The Epistle also wrote of then and of your life today, the first line there, **the domain of darkness. Domain of darkness**. The prophet Malachi spoke to that too. Your life in Christ can appear to be a waste of time and energy. **It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping His charge/rules, of walking in mourning/your sin before the Lord? Arrogant seem blessed; godless, evil-doers not only prosper; seems God lets them get away with it.**

Yet, even now temptation to despair. It all seems so unfair in this life. Whether you're faithful or not, appears to make no difference. Whether you pray or not seems not to matter. Whether you're righteous or wicked is of no obvious consequence, unless it be that the righteous suffer while the wicked flourish, those less than faithful to His Word seem to prosper. So where is your God? Why does He not help you? Why are things so difficult; life such a mess?

You go to church, give offerings, you say your prayers, read the Bible, you do nice things for others. And what do you have to show for it all? What's the point? You may wonder what difference does it really make?

Satan taunts you, tempts you. If you're a dear child of God, then why this, why that? Why do you hurt, so alone? Why must you suffer? Why must your job be a pain? Why is your marriage stressful, why are your children disobedient? Or why do you have no spouse or child there for you?

The devil hurls these assaults against you, against the words and promises of your Holy Baptism, against the forgiveness of the Gospel. He'll drive you to doubt, despair, perhaps even worse- apathy, no need for God or

this place. You're caught in this great tribulation, rages around you, batters your heart, confuses your head, wearies your soul. Either God is not good enough, or you are not good enough. Either God must be deceiving you, or unable to help.

But you know that's not true! God forgive your doubts, fears you've entertained. From the cross, ***Father forgive them***, also His prayer for you.

There is much darkness; family, people living in darkness. That need this light, the only light, the only hope. A King to rule in our lives with His light of truth and life, **who made peace** for you, in you, **by the blood of the cross**.

Look around you, O Christian. Do you think you are alone in your suffering? Do you think your crosses are heavier than those of your brothers and sisters? No, they're not. We know little of what hidden struggles those around you endure.

Here's a secret. Everyone's life is hard. Everyone hurts. Everyone struggles, loses, is afraid. Everyone has a broken heart. Everyone has family they hurt over. Some people deny it out of pride. They're afraid to show weakness. Some people hide it in shame or think it is none of your business. But no one sails through this life unscathed. No one. No one free of doubt, deep regrets, unspeakable scars, or sorrow. Nothing has befallen you not common to man. Look upon your brothers and sisters with sympathy. If it seems to you that they have it easy, you are wrong.

The Lord who's given His Life for you, doesn't ask you to endure these things forever or alone. When the last name written in the Book of Life, this world will cease. Until then, He's place you in a family, in the Church, with a shepherd to tend you and serve you His gifts and to live with all the blessings He pours out.

You live by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God. He will not fail. Your feelings, your intellect, your family, your friends, your home and goods, your works, everything around you: will all eventually leave you, fall apart, fail you, or die. He will not. The Lord's promises never stop.

He will bring you home when His will for you is done here. He will not have you endure here a moment longer.

Until then He comes to feed your body and soul with His Body and Blood that you strengthened for the times, trials to come, that you would rejoice while you wait, rejoice while you endure.

You are spared. You are His treasured possession. Jesus says to you sinners that believe, **Truly I say to you, you shall be with Me in Paradise.** Your King, here with you, reigning, to keep you everyday. Bask in His light in this domain of darkness. And paradise with your King awaits.