

## HOMILETTE

GOOD FRIDAY 4-19-19

Good evening everyone at this very solemn liturgy in our catholic faith.

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I grew up in the era of the movie Ben Hur. For those who may not have seen it, it takes place during the time of Christ when the Romans were in Jerusalem. There are three scenes in that film that have always stuck out to me – the chariot race, when Judah Ben Hur found his mother and sister in a leper colony and the crucifixion scene.

The feelings I experienced as a junior high school student were powerful and had a profound impact on me. Seeing the re-enactment of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross was my connection to Good Friday for many years.

In 2003 I was asked to be a co-presider at this same liturgy. My focus shifted from Christ's suffering and his death on the cross to Mary... having to watch her son die a painfully slow death. I had become a mom in the many years since junior high school. I saw the scene through the filter of a mother's eyes.

When I began to write this homilette, I was going to travel the same path until I started to do some research on Mary. I learned some rather astonishing things. For a person who is so important to the life of Christ, Mary is mentioned 12 times in Luke's gospel, 6 times in Matthew's, once in Mark's and twice in John's.

We all know the story of the Immaculate Conception (Luke 1:28) and her giving birth to Jesus in a stable (Luke 2:1-20). Mary doesn't appear again until the Wedding at Cana in the gospel of John 2:1-12 when Jesus, whom I'm guessing was about 30, was asked by his mother to perform the miracle of changing water into wine. We do not hear of Mary again until the crucifixion.

Mary... was the woman chosen by God to bear God's only son so that we might all be able to share in everlasting life after our death. You would think that such an important person in Jesus' life would have deserved more references in the gospels. Not so.

Further down the research road, a good friend pointed me toward a mid-20th century American composer, Samuel Barber, who wrote a cycle of songs entitled "Hermit Songs". The lyrics were translated from the writings of anonymous Irish monks and scholars who lived between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. One of these songs is entitled "The Crucifixion". The lyrics are as follows...

At the cry of the first bird  
They began to crucify Thee, O Swan!  
Never shall lament cease because of that  
It was like the parting of day from night  
Ah, sore was the suffering borne  
By the body of Mary's Son  
But sorer still to Him was the grief  
Which for His sake  
Came upon His mother

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There is - the missing piece for me – the fact that Jesus had to watch his mother Mary, Mary of Clopas and Mary of Magdala – knowing the impact his dying was having on them – he could see it in their faces.

To me, Good Friday in its grief and sadness is all about love – God’s love for us by giving us God’s only son, Mary’s love of her son, and Christ’s love for his mother and friends. Why else would anyone have accepted such a painful path???

### **Good Friday, 2019 – Second Homilette**

Robin, thank you for reminding us of the passage from John, Chapter 3, Verse 16 “For God so loved the world, that God gave God’s one and only child to the world”. And connecting that to Jesus’ love for Mary, his mother, and Mary’s love for Jesus. I think of that Bible passage often. Related to that I often think of Second Romans, Chapter 5, Verse 8: “God demonstrates God’s own love toward us in that Christ died for us”.

Christ dying for us in an incredibly powerful message from God which we will reflect back on in a moment.

But first, I’d like to share with you that at North Shore Community College and in the surrounding communities, I have been doing workshops for many years that focuses on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The work is so important to me that even after retirement I plan to continue it.

In a standard diversity workshop, we look at the many different parts of ourselves—nationality, race, ethnicity, gender expression, gender identity, religion/spirituality, class, age, ability status, private identities, and, of course, sexual orientation.

Something that I've observed by doing these workshops is the heavy burden of internalized oppression on LGBTQI people. More so than any other group that I've observed.

Internalized oppression are those less-than-positive feelings that we have about ourselves and how we use those less-than-positive feelings to put down other people in our group.

We've all observed this: A few gay guys chatting and using the three letter F work with each other. As one example.

Sometimes we've been able to take some of those words and turn them around to use as words of empowerment. Queer and Dyke, for example. But for many, particular, many older people, those words still have a sting to them.

When we think of God becoming human, sacrificing life for us as LGBTQI people. It makes us pause.

Why would God do that for us?

Who am I... for Jesus to be dying for me?

Am I really that worthy?

But, God loves us. God loves all of us! Even our identity as LGBTQI people.

Each and every week at Dignity/Boston, Rich Razi gave us those words "Let us not be our own oppressors". "Lord, I am worthy to receive you"

As we transition from Lent to the Easter Season. Let us truly become an Easter people. Moving from the darkness of internalized oppression to the light of pride and hope!

Let me leave you with just a few "Beatitudes of Dignity" to think about and reflect on. Our own Marianne Duddy Burke wrote these a couple decades back now. We'll be reflecting

on these in full in Salem in June for our North Shore Pride Interfaith Service. But here's 3 or 4 for me to leave you with.

Blessed are you lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex people. You are a unique and glorious reflection of God's astounding creativity and love.

Blessed are you who challenge stereotypes and caricatures. You bring light to the world

Blessed are you when you work for full equality and inclusion. You honor the sacredness of all people.

Blessed are you, reviled and persecuted, yet persistent in faith, hope, and love. Rejoice and be proud, for in you God's love is revealed.

Christ died for us--lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex beloved people of God.