



Today we reach the midpoint of our Lenten journey, a time of closely following Christ and meditating on the saving mystery of the cross. The short Second Reading from Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians describes how we are to view Christ's cross as well as our own crosses.

This remarkable reading comes from the man who vigorously persecuted the early Christians. Saint Paul even says of himself: "I am the least of the apostles, not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me has not been ineffective" (1 Cor 15:9-10). Note the radical change in Paul's life; from a "persecutor" he became a "propagator" of Christianity!

Paul asserts that the message of the cross, of Christ crucified, was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. The Jews were expecting a glorious and powerful king who would vanquish their enemies. For the Greeks, as Saint Thomas notes, "it seemed opposed to human wisdom that God should die, and that a just and wise man should willingly give himself over to a most shameful death."

Yet, contrary to the expectations of both Jews and Gentiles, the Gospel is the preaching of a *crucified Messiah*. Truly scandalous! Utter foolishness! However, Saint Paul vigorously asserts that the cross remains central in Christian life:



GOD'S FOOLISH Wisdom

by Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

"We proclaim Christ crucified" (1 Cor 1:23); again, "I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2).

The crucified Christ is God's way of fully sharing our humanity; Jesus experienced the whole range of human joys and sufferings. Vatican II expressed the mystery of God-made-man in a beautiful, poetic way: "For by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every person. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice, and loved with a human heart" (GS 22). Though divine, Jesus was totally, fully, completely human.

Jesus experienced the full range of physical and mental pain on the cross. The crucifixion is God's radical manifestation of his solidarity with us in all our sufferings. Is this a stumbling block? Is this foolishness? "Absolutely not!" would be Saint Paul's answer. This "crucified Christ" is "the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom; the weakness of God is stronger than human strength" (1 Cor 1:24-25).

We are invited to constantly measure our lives against the way of Jesus, against the pattern of the Gospel, against the norm of the cross. And, this is **not** easy to accept. Here we are dealing with a paradox, with measuring rods of effectiveness not according to human wisdom, but in accord with the foolishness of God!

As we journey through life with all its joys and sorrows, we can recall a simple formulation of how Jesus is in solidarity with us. We cannot have a "**cross-less Christ**" [an "uncrucified" Jesus]; yet, we never have a "**Christ-less cross**" [sorrows or sufferings where Jesus is absent from our lives]. Indeed, a profound paradox, one of the central mysteries of our faith!

The cross is still a stumbling block and foolishness to many. However, to us who have been called, it remains "the power of God and the wisdom of God." In short, Christ crucified is our greatest lesson for living and believing!

PASTORAL CATECHESIS FOR THE YEAR OF *MISSIO AD GENTES*

Pastoral Guidance in Difficult Times

Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

Reviewing the history of Christianity in the Philippines necessarily involves analyzing secular events that impact the Church. The martial law period (1972-1981) posed new and challenging questions. Among the more pernicious effects of the two-decade Marcos era (1965-1986) were increased militarization, insurgency, the absence of juridical procedures, the destruction of democratic processes, economic decline, and pervasive fear. The end result, in the words of a Filipino social scientist, was to place the country "on the trembling edge of a social volcano."

This period proved a time of testing and growth for the local Church. Prophetic stances were often met by military

abuse, imprisonment and torture, and even deportation for foreign missionaries. The Church evolved a position of "critical collaboration," cooperating with the regime on programs beneficial to the populace while criticizing government actions judged harmful.

An important 1977 CBCP pastoral letter, *The Bond of Love in Proclaiming the Good News*, enunciated a clear, comprehensive, holistic vision to guide the Church's mission of integral evangelization: "This is **EVANGELIZATION**: the proclamation, above all, of **SALVATION** from sin; the liberation from everything oppressive to man; the **DEVELOPMENT** of man in all his dimensions, personal and communitarian; and ultimately, the **RENEWAL OF SOCIETY** in all its strata through the interplay of the **GOSPEL TRUTHS** and man's concrete **TOTAL LIFE**. ... **THIS IS OUR TASK. THIS IS OUR MISSION.**"

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 25 [24]:15–16)

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare. Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P — The Lord be with you.
All — **And with your spirit.**

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P — The Decalogue, in the First Reading, declares that the appropriate response to God's liberation is for the people to obey God's commandments as a charter of their freedom. In his zeal for God's house, Jesus cleanses the temple, reacting against a kind of worship without a soul, against a religion motivated mainly by the pursuit of material gain. He is the living temple through which we who believe have access to the Father. We serve God with a loving heart.

Penitential Act

P — Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

P — Have mercy on us, O Lord.

All — **For we have sinned against you.**

P — Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

All — **And grant us your salvation.**

P — May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All — **Amen.**

P — Lord, have mercy.

All — **Lord, have mercy.**

P — Christ, have mercy.

All — **Christ, have mercy.**

P — Lord, have mercy.

All — **Lord, have mercy.**

(The Gloria is omitted.)

Collect

P — Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, author of every mercy and of all goodness, who in fasting, prayer and almsgiving have shown us a remedy for sin, look graciously on this confession of our lowliness, that we, who are bowed down by our conscience, may always be lifted up by your mercy.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All — **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (Ex 20:1–3, 7–8, 12–17)
(Short Form) *(Sit)*

The Lord gave the Ten Commandments to Moses so that people might know that true worship consists of serving God with loving hearts.

A reading from the Book of Exodus

IN THOSE DAYS, God delivered all these commandments: "I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery. You shall not have other gods besides me.

"You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain. For the Lord will not leave unpunished the one who takes his name in vain.

"Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day. Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male or female slave, nor his ox or ass, nor anything else that belongs to him."

— The word of the Lord.

All — **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 19)

R — **Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.**

Sr. M. C. A. Parco, FSP

Lord, you have the words of
e - ver - las - ting life.

1. The law of the LORD is perfect,/ refreshing the soul;/ the decree of the LORD is trustworthy,/ giving wisdom to the simple. **(R)**

2. The precepts of the LORD are right,/ rejoicing the heart;/ the command of the LORD is clear,/ enlightening the eye. **(R)**

3. The fear of the LORD is pure,/ enduring forever;/ the ordinances of the LORD are true,/ all of them just. **(R)**

4. They are more precious than gold,/ than a heap of purest gold;/ sweeter also than syrup/ or honey from the comb. **(R)**

Second Reading (1 Cor 1:22–25)

Paul proclaims that it is in Jesus' cross that we learn the sublime wisdom of God. In his infinite knowledge and love, God gives us his Son to redeem us by his suffering.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

— The word of the Lord.
All — Thanks be to God.

Verse before the Gospel
(Jn 3:16) (*Stand*)

All — God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life.

Gospel (Jn 2:13–25)

P — A reading from the holy Gospel according to John
All — Glory to you, O Lord.

SINCE the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, “Take these out of here, and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.” His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, *Zeal for your house will consume me*. At this the Jews answered and said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.

While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, and did not need anyone to

testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.

— The Gospel of the Lord.
All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (*Sit*)

Profession of Faith (*Stand*)

All — I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P — Let us pray to the Father that we may offer true worship and offer ourselves as his living temple. In a spirit of humility and trust, we pray:

R — Lord, hear our prayer.

C — May the Church continue to take the path of purification and conversion so that in every way it will be a community of praise and compassion. We pray: **(R)**

C — May our religious and civil leaders see in Christ the power to save and the wisdom to lead. We pray: **(R)**

C — May those preparing for baptism and reception into the Catholic Church be mindful that discipleship is a call to help others. May they find freedom in God’s steadfast love. We pray: **(R)**

C — May we respect our bodies as temples of the Holy

Spirit. May we shun acts of lasciviousness, violence, and other indignities that harm the human person. We pray: **(R)**

C — May the Lord give healing to the sick, comfort to the dying, conversion to sinners, and light to those experiencing darkness in their lives. We pray: **(R)**

C — Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: **(R)**

P — Lord, cleanse our hearts of selfishness. Help us to love and serve you in faithfulness and truth, and to show this by our concern for others. You who live and reign for ever and ever.

All — Amen.



Presentation of the Gifts (*Stand*)

P — Pray, brethren...

All — May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P — Be pleased, O Lord, with these sacrificial offerings, and grant that we who beseech pardon for our sins, may take care to forgive our neighbor.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

Preface II of Lent

P — The Lord be with you.

All — And with your spirit.

P — Lift up your hearts.

All — We lift them up to the Lord.

P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All — It is right and just.

P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you have given your children a sacred time for the renewing and purifying of their hearts, that, freed from disordered affections, they may so deal with the things of this passing world as to hold rather to the things that eternally endure.

And so, with all the Angels and Saints, we praise you, as without end we acclaim:

All — Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Kneel)

Acclamation (Stand)

All — When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All — Our Father...

P — Deliver us, Lord...

All — For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion

(Kneel)

P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All — Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 84[83]:4-5)

The sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for her young; by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they who dwell in your house, for ever singing your praise.

Prayer after Communion

(Stand)



JOURNEYS OF FAITH OBERAMMERGAU 2022
A Passion Play that happens only every 10 years

MAY 2022 DEPARTURES

BALKANS (May 16 - 31, 2022)

Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia Hercegovina
with Fr. Jerome "Jigs" Rosalinda

MARIAN JOURNEY (May 16 - Jun 4, 2022)

Portugal, Spain, France, Germany & Italy
with Fr. Arvin Soriano

CENTRAL EUROPE (May 18 - 31, 2022)

Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg & Germany
with Fr. Jun Sescon

Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein & Switzerland (May 24 - Jun 5, 2022)
with Fr. Alex Thomas

OBERAMMERGAU DEPARTURES ARE ALSO AVAILABLE IN SEPTEMBER.

WE ALSO OFFER HOLY LAND, MARIAN, EASTERN EUROPE, BALKANS, GREECE AND TURKEY, MEXICO TOURS & PILGRIMAGES.

Call us at (+632) 8929-0144 or (+632) 8929-0155
+63917-5616440 (Globe) & +63999-9935580 (Smart)
join@journeys.com.ph | www.journeys.com.ph



P — Let us pray. (Pause)

As we receive the pledge of things yet hidden in heaven and are nourished while still on earth with the Bread that comes from on high, we humbly entreat you, O Lord, that what is being brought about in us in mystery may come to true completion.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P — The Lord be with you.

All — And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P — Bow down for the blessing. (Pause)

Direct your people, O Lord, we pray, with heavenly instruction, that by avoiding every evil and pursuing all that is good, they may earn not your anger but your unending mercy

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All — Amen.

Dismissal

P — Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

All — Thanks be to God.

BE A PRIEST OR A BROTHER OF MASS MEDIA

If you are a Grade 12 student, a college student, or a young professional, male, single, and interested to become a priest or a brother involved in the apostolate of social communication, we invite you to journey with us.

**Visit our websites:
ssp.ph or stpauls.ph**

DO YOU WANT TO SUBSCRIBE TO SAMBUHAY DIGITAL MISSALETTE?

For inquiries and orders:

Sambuhay Missalette

Sambuhay@stpauls.ph

(02) 8895-9701