

Good Friday 2019

Today our opening prayer asked,

“grant that just, as being conformed to him, we have borne by the law of nature the image of man on earth, so by the sanctification of grace we may bear the image of the Man of heaven.”

If you had attended mass on Christmas day, you would have heard the priest pray the following in the opening prayer,

“O God, who wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and still more wonderfully restored it, grant, we pray, that we may share in the divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.”

This is the goal of the Christian life—a share in the divinity of Christ. But this share in the divinity of Christ only comes when conform our actions to those of Christ—most especially that action of sharing our humanity. Often times we don’t want that humanity. Humanity means weakness, humanity means temptation, and humanity means death. As the Letter to the Hebrews points out, Jesus experienced all these, yet without sin.

When we grasp at the divinity without fully accepting the humanity we then experience sin. When we live as if we have the divine power

over weakness, temptation, and death—we sin. That sin is manifested in all the ways in which we harm the human dignity of ourselves and others—when we accept racism, greed, division, and hatred. That sin is manifested when we believe we can control life and death. When a loved one contracts a fatal disease we become powerless to stop its inevitable end, yet we accept a world that allows states and individuals to decide who is worthy of life and death—we live in a world that allows war to decide international conflict, that allows states to use the death penalty to punish criminals, and that allows abortion.

Jesus accepted the fullness of humanity—the most human thing he accepted was his own death. The cross that he accepted has become the throne of grace that we can confidently approach for mercy and help. We can approach that cross confident in knowing that Jesus already understands our weaknesses, our temptations, and all the many deaths we need to experience. When we do that, the Father will see in us the divine image of the Son in the fullness of humanity and offer us a share in the divinity that awaits us all in heaven.