

Under the Cross...

I don't know how many of us really pay attention to the beautiful and comforting prayers we use while celebrating the Eucharist, Holy Mass. I am not thinking here about the Creed or the Lord's Prayer that we recite or chant together when we are at Mass, but I am thinking about the prayers that priests say on behalf of all of us -- it's called the Eucharistic Prayer and we have a few different options to choose from. Many of you may now be following the Masses online or on TV. I want to encourage you to pay more attention to these prayers. I am sure they will bring you more comfort in these days; they certainly bring that comfort to me.

Think first about the Memorial Acclamation which comes immediately after the consecration, a remembering that encompasses the entirety of time: "We proclaim Your death, O Lord" (the past), "and profess Your Resurrection" (the present), "until You come again" (the future). The Eucharistic Prayer continues with a memorial, and it recollects the most significant events in the life of Jesus as well as His Paschal Mystery. So, for example, Eucharistic Prayer I resumes, "Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial of the blessed Passion, the Resurrection from the dead, and the glorious Ascension into heaven of Christ, Your Son, our Lord," or Eucharistic Prayer II says more succinctly, "Therefore, as we celebrate the memorial of His death and resurrection," while Eucharistic Prayer III also includes the future dimension, "As we look forward to His second coming." The Mass fulfills Jesus' request at the Last Supper, "Do this in memory of Me."

I don't know about you, but for me these are the most comforting and hope-giving words of prayer. We are with Jesus in His passion, His death on the cross but we also will be there at His resurrection! In our own lives, there can be times of passion, for sadness, for doubt, of pain; and there will be times for death itself. Not just physical death that we all will experience sooner or later, but I am thinking about the dying of our old selves. We do this by fighting with our sins, temptations, and bad habits, and then there will also be time for resurrection, which brings joy, happiness, laughter and rejoicing.

During His passion and death, all Jesus's friends abandoned Him- "Near the cross of Jesus stood His mother, His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene (...) and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby" John 19:25. Perhaps we feel the same way now, we may feel like we have abandoned Jesus because we can't be under the cross with Him. But He didn't need all His disciples there and He also doesn't need all of us there. It is we that need Him in our lives.

As I said before, this is a very unusual season of Lent. We are 'in the desert', we experience sadness, loss, maybe anger because we can't be with Jesus in Church now. But we also know that there will be Resurrection and there will be Pentecost, when Jesus will be once again be with His friends, His disciples, and His family. There will be Pentecost when we will be together, hundreds, thousands of us with Jesus during the Holy Eucharist. Let us now be patient and wait. This sadness will bring us joy again, even greater joy than we have experienced before.

God Bless!
Fr. Kris