

“Justice For Laura” Novena - 9 Days of Prayer

Day Five



Scripture Passage: “The Crowning with Thorns”

“Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him, and making a crown of thorns they placed it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand.

And kneeling before him they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they spat upon him, and took the reed and struck him on the head.” - MATTHEW 27: 27-30

Meditation:

They have turned our Lord into the butt of a joke. They have regarded the True King of Kings, The Lord of Lords, the Most High God as nothing more than a means to their own petty and sadistic satisfaction. Even if Jesus were merely a man - a mortal human being - and not a veritable God, then this situation should cause the hair on the back of our necks to stand up and our stomach should be turning in revolutionary disgust. Man – mortal human beings, both male and female – is possessed of a dignity which is far

greater than we can ever comprehend. We are made in the image and likeness of God! How often do we disregard this Truth and treat people as though they were made in the image and likeness of a glorified ape... Even apes do not merit the treatment that Jesus received in this scenario.

How often have we treated Christ exactly the same way?... They made him a mock king. They said with their lips, "Hail, King of the Jews," yet with their actions they said something very different. How many times have we gone to Church on Sunday and praised the Lord with our lips, and then turned right back around and done something very different with our actions...

Christ, in teaching his disciples about the judgment at the end of time, spoke about our actions in direct reference to Him (see Matt. 25:31-46). "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matt 25:40). In other words, the way we treat our human brothers and sisters IS the way we treat our Lord. He makes no distinction. If we are kind and gratuitous to others, then we are kind and gratuitous to Christ, and we fulfill what He Himself commanded: "Love one another, even as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

He said, "I was hungry and you fed me... I was in prison and you came to visit me..." (see Matt 25:31-46). Laura's murderer is hungry. He is starving, in fact, for love. And we all are – for love is the deepest and most fundamental truth and meaning of human life. Without love, we cannot even begin to make sense out of life, and our own humanity remains an enigma as it were, unless we experience and participate in love. This man for whom we pray was utterly deprived of and starving for love when he murdered Laura. No other reason can explain the actions of this man. To do those things to an innocent little girl... he was desperate. This is no excuse! But if we can unravel the deeper motivations for what he did, we can begin to feel authentic compassion for this man, even to the point that we would want to actively embrace and love him if we had the chance to. In fact, every Christian on the face of the planet is called to such a high degree of love, and in a certain sense we are not truly Christian unless we are actively striving to attain this kind of love. Jesus said to love others as he has loved us, and unless we are truly and actively seeking that love in our lives then we are hypocrites to claim the name of Christian. Prejudice has no place in Christianity. We cannot condemn this man, or any person, for any thing which they have done. The things which they have done might be utterly depraved and evil, but the person who did those things is still, at the deepest and most fundamental level of who they are, utterly beautiful and good – made in the image and likeness of God, who IS Love.

Laura's murderer is made in the image and likeness of God – Trinitarian Love: life giving, self-sacrificing, gift-of-self, LOVE. That is the image he is made in, even if he failed to act like it. He failed to act like it, most probably anyways, because he was

deprived of love himself; nobody ever showed him true love, and the result was a starvation for love which manifested itself in a horrible way. He is hungry for love, and he must be fed. He is also in prison, so to speak – a prison of isolation from the love that he is hungry for. Cut off from love, a man can not ever hope to find himself or any real meaning in life, and in these circumstances we can begin to understand the roots of certain evil actions on the part of men. “I was hungry and you fed me... I was in prison and you came to visit me... Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me!” In other words, “If your hearts are so hard that you cannot have compassion on any person in the world who is in need, you are failing to have compassion on me in my great passion which has paid the price for your soul.” And to top it off, if we fail to love as Christ loves, or at the bare minimum seek with all our hearts to do so, we are, in our actions, crowning him anew with thorns, even as we proclaim with our lips, “Hail, King!”

The glorious good news about all of this – that would be the Gospel – is that we have a merciful and loving God who we can ALWAYS turn to in trust. That God wishes to fill our hearts with His own life-giving Love, and His Love is THE Love that truly satisfies the aching human heart. Let us pray for Laura's murderer that he will discover this utterly awesome truth, that GOD IS LOVE, and He, God, is the love for which he, Laura's murderer, has been looking for this whole time.

And we pray for Justice For Laura.

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Abba, Father,

You have revealed Yourself as the God of Love Who desires all Your children to be saved, and Who will run to embrace any soul who sincerely turns back to You.

We lift up the soul of Laura's killer, Your beloved child who has wandered in a far away land squandering the inheritance which You, his most Loving Father, have bestowed upon him. We beg the Holy Spirit to sing Your song of Love into his heart. Speak to his soul of his dignity and beauty as Your child, and give him the confidence to turn back to You in trust and repentance.

We ask this through the infinite merits of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Mercy Whose compassion knows no bounds.

Amen.

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