



The Holy See

WAY OF THE CROSS AT THE COLOSSEUM

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI AFTER THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS AT THE COLOSSEUM

Palatine Hill

Good Friday, 22 April 2011

[\(Video\)](#)

[Photo Gallery](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This evening, in faith, we have accompanied Jesus as he takes the final steps of his earthly journey, the most painful steps, the steps that lead to Calvary. We have heard the cries of the crowd, the words of condemnation, the insults of the soldiers, the lamentation of the Virgin Mary and of the women. Now we are immersed in the silence of this night, in the silence of the cross, the silence of death. It is a silence pregnant with the burden of pain borne by a man rejected, oppressed, downtrodden, the burden of sin which mars his face, the burden of evil. Tonight we have re-lived, deep within our hearts, the drama of Jesus, weighed down by pain, by evil, by human sin.

What remains now before our eyes? It is a crucified man, a cross raised on Golgotha, a cross which seems a sign of the final defeat of the One who brought light to those immersed in darkness, the One who spoke of the power of forgiveness and of mercy, the One who asked us to believe in God's infinite love for each human person. Despised and rejected by men, there stands before us "a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity, one from whom others hide their faces" (*Is 53:3*).

But let us look more closely at that man crucified between earth and heaven. Let us contemplate

him more intently, and we will realize that the cross is not the banner of the victory of death, sin and evil, but rather the luminous sign of love, of God's immense love, of something that we could never have asked, imagined or expected: God bent down over us, he lowered himself, even to the darkest corner of our lives, in order to stretch out his hand and draw us to himself, to bring us all the way to himself. The cross speaks to us of the supreme love of God and invites, today, to renew our faith in the power of that love, and to believe that in every situation of our lives, our history and our world, God is able to vanquish death, sin and evil, and to give us new, risen life. In the Son of God's death on the cross, we find the seed of new hope for life, like the seed which dies within the earth.

This night full of silence, full of hope, echoes God's call to us as found in the words of Saint Augustine: "Have faith! You will come to me and you will taste the good things of my table, even as I did not disdain to taste the evil things of your table... I have promised you my own life. As a pledge of this, I have given you my death, as if to say: Look! I am inviting you to share in my life. It is a life where no one dies, a life which is truly blessed, which offers an incorruptible food, the food which refreshes and never fails. The goal to which I invite you ... is friendship with the Father and the Holy Spirit, it is the eternal supper, it is communion with me ... It is a share in my own life (cf. *Sermo* 231, 5).

Let us gaze on the crucified Jesus, and let us ask in prayer: Enlighten our hearts, Lord, that we may follow you along the way of the cross. Put to death in us the "old man" bound by selfishness, evil and sin. Make us "new men", men and women of holiness, transformed and enlivened by your love.

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