

Fourth Sunday of Easter
3 May 2020
Saint Marcus Saint Lawrence

Fruit of the Burn of Spiritual Endurance

“Beloved: If you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps.” These words from First Peter in our second reading today are extremely fitting. We all remember as children when we did something wrong and we had to be punished. I remember when I used to have to sit in the corner or my parents would exile me to my room. It seemed like forever sometimes. As adults too we do encounter punishment for our misdeeds. These punishments aren’t arbitrarily put on us by an authority like when we were young. Rather the punishment we endure often “corresponds to our crimes,” to quote the good thief on the cross Luke 23:41. This is not the kind of patient suffering that Peter is talking about. Peter is talking about the patient suffering that comes from merely existing, for striving for holiness, and for daring to live for God!

The Christian life is a marathon of sorts, one we willingly run out of Love for what the Lord has done for us both by creating us and salvaging us in Christ! The book of Job and the life of Christ reveal though, that we will suffer in this life just because we exist. The good thief on the cross as speaks about Jesus and says, this man has done nothing wrong! Jesus’s great crime was making himself equal to God. The high priest said to him, “I order you to tell us under oath before the living God whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” Jesus said to him in reply, “You have said so. But I tell you: From now on you will see ‘the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power’ and ‘coming on the clouds of heaven.’” Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has blasphemed!” What further need have we of witnesses? You have now heard the blasphemy; what is your opinion?” They said in reply, “He deserves to die!” Matthew 23:63-66. This answer of Jesus to the high priest is a reference to Daniel’s vision. (Daniel 7:13-14).

Jesus unjustly condemned and unjustly suffered and died. Through his patient faithfulness he brings life: eternal life to fallen humanity! Peter says this is the example for us to follow. How so? Well right now so many of us have the opportunity to live this reality. Being isolated at home, having to wear masks, limiting our contact, financial difficulty, not being able to do what we want because of the danger of bodily sickness and even death. This suffering is not our fault. The beauty is that this kind of suffering is very powerful, because this

kind of suffering isn't punishment for something we did or didn't do. It is suffering that comes because of fallenness and the decisions of others over whom we have no control. We must not despair!

This kind of suffering should excite us as Christians, not because we like the pain. No. It should excite us because we look forward to the life, the good, the glory that will come from it. Marathon runners don't run because they like the burning pain that pervades all their muscles. No, the run is for victory. In these Easter days we have the opportunity to run with Jesus to suffer with him to salvage our world, our country, our families, friends and even our enemies. So, let's lace up our spiritual running shoes and patiently endure the scourge of our time giving all our suffering to Jesus and keep in mind we do it wanting to share in his victory over it when that victory comes! Happy Easter!