

## The Bishop's Reflection for Holy Week

March 24, 2015

*"The power of God is the powerlessness of God's unconditional love shown to us in the cross. God is the beggar who will not force his way into our homes unless we open the door. God is with us at every moment with open arms of love, laughing when we are laughing, weeping when we are weeping, rejoicing when we are rejoicing. God shares in the brokenness of this world out of abundance of divine love. It is because God is the fountain fullness of love, in Bonaventure's view, that God can share in the suffering of our lives and through these sufferings draw us into new life. For God's love cannot be overcome by human power nor can it be conquered by human force. God's love, shown to us in the weakness and powerlessness of the cross, is the power of love to heal and transform death into life. God is most God-like in the suffering of the cross."*

Ilia Delio, *The Humility of God: A Franciscan Perspective*  
(St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2005), p. 96.

I am reminded during Holy Week that for Christians the very basis of our faith is absurd. God is so close to us that we see the face of God in the mess of creation and the pain of human life. God is not deaf to our cries, rather God himself weeps with us. God with us can only be true because of the cross. God is with us in the houseless poor having their possessions removed from the sidewalk. God is with us in the displaced, wounded, and those killed by war. God is with us in our own failures, pain and grief. The crucified God is with us in the reality of life.

We do not need to involve in spiritual gymnastics to reach God. We do not need some special knowledge to know God. God has come to us and remains in the wonder and mess of creation. God's face can be seen in the ordinary person – in every face we see every day. God's face can be seen in the face we look at in the mirror. On Good Friday, we are again invited to leave everything that is broken and hurt at the cross, that on Easter, it might be raised with Jesus Christ.

As you look to Holy Week this year, I invite you to look for the face of God in those around you, but especially by those who are hurt and rejected. When we care for others, we are given the gift of being Christ for them and they reveal Christ to us. It is in our own weakness and hurt that we can know the love of God.

I hope the Prayer attributed to St. Francis (found on p. 833 of the Book of Common Prayer) will be our path to God this Holy Week, in the Easter season and throughout life:

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to

understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

The Right Reverend Robert L. Fitzpatrick