

Palm Sunday 2013

Fr. Paul Check

Each day, two desires contest with each other within us. The first is a desire for *satisfaction*, in a selfish way. The second is a desire for *purification*, in a humble way.

Every instinct of our fallen human nature rebels against the idea of purification. To the old man (or natural man or unregenerate man...Eph 4:22; Col 3:9) as St Paul calls him, the world seems made for enjoyment and that is why we are put into it. I have the desire to enjoy, to be satisfied (selfishly), and world supplies the means. (Newman) The pull in this direction is strong, and it can be especially so when we are hurt, alone, or confused.

And then comes the encouragement and clarity of Christ: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Mt 5:8) This is a divine promise: a pure heart, a Christ-like heart will see—will *possess*—God...and so will be joyful. This Beatitude summarizes, in one line, the Gospel: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Joy follows purity of heart...a heart purified in a particular way: by the Cross of Christ.

The faithful disciple of the Master knows that the Passion fulfills perfectly the life of the God-Man...that it is in perfect harmony with everything Jesus said and did. The honest Christian knows that the Cross is Our Lord's most vigorous expression of His philosophy of life, if we are to do the will of God, as He did. (Leen)

Jesus did not live to please Himself. He lived to please the Father and to give Himself to others because He desired to please the Father. (Leen) Jesus Christ is priest and victim. He offers the sacrifice and He is the sacrifice.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The Cross rests in the loving and good hands of Our Father in Heaven as an instrument—His chosen instrument—of purification.

Our joy depends not in overcoming the disorder outside of ourselves in the world—and even in the Church—but by conquering, through the grace of the Cross, the disorder inside our hearts, the disorder brought on by selfishness. (cf. Rom 7:19)

"I do as the Father has commanded me," Jesus said. "Rise, let us go hence." (Jn 14:31)