

**Passion Sunday**  
**3.24.24**

*(Because of the length of the Passion proclaimed at Mass, today's homily is a briefer reflection.)*

In today's proclamation of the Passion from St. Mark's gospel, we hear Jesus' cry out from the cross, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which is translated "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" That phrase is the opening line of Psalm 22. We sang that phrase and portions of that psalm between the first and second readings at Mass this morning.

The cry of "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" might initially strike us as a statement of abandonment, despondency, and futility. But in the Jewish tradition of the time, when one quotes the first line of a psalm, as Jesus did from the cross, the hearer would know that the person speaking or crying out is actually referring to the entire psalm.

While Psalm 22 does speak of abandonment and of being reviled by others, it also includes a sense of hope and even triumph for the one who remains faithful, even during the worst of trials. It is a psalm of encouragement, not despondency. It is a prayer of triumph, not of defeat.

In making that exclamation, Jesus was affirming the excruciating suffering he was experiencing. But he also was affirming his faith in the Father and how the Father would redeem this suffering and bring about transformation through this experience – both for Christ and for all of us. That meaning can be found in several of the verses of this psalm.

***You have been my guide since I was first formed...***

***You are not far from me...***

***I will praise you...***

***For he has not turned his face away from me, but hears me when I cry...***

***(Because of this) I will proclaim his name to all people...***

While we focus today and on Good Friday on the passion of Christ, we don't remain fixated on his suffering and death. Rather, we are moved to focus on the redemptive nature of Christ's suffering. His death leads to resurrection. And the same holds true for us. Christ walks with us when we suffer. He accompanies us as we walk our own *Via Dolorosa* and remains with us as we experience our own crucifixion.

Let us take a moment now and at other times during this Holy Week to unite our suffering with Christ. May we know that the Father who strengthened and sustained Christ in his darkest hour, be what sustains us. May we also know that Christ who was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, allows us to experience a glimpse and the foretaste in this life the resurrection which is promised us in the life to come.