

April 15, 2017, Holy Saturday

This is the most solemn time of the year for Christians when we remember the suffering and humiliating death that Christ suffered for us. If we place ourselves at this time of Jesus' death, look around and ask what was happening with the disciples, I can imagine they were all in a state of shock and disbelief. Their teacher, friend, and rabbi was just brutally tortured and killed before their eyes. Now they gather to reflect on why this happened to their shepherd.

At the time Jesus was arrested, all of the disciples fled in fear of being arrested or losing their life. Only Peter followed the crowd as Jesus was being led away, shackled and brutalized by his captors. But as we know, Peter also succumbed to the pressures of the crowd and denied knowing Christ. Now, the disciples are all huddled together in hiding, thinking about what they should have done to prevent the death of their friend. They also wondered what the plan for their life would be now that Jesus was dead. However, this plan was neither the disciples nor ours to change because this was God's plan for our salvation.

Our Gospel reading for Holy Saturday tells us the women who followed Jesus went to the tomb to finish preparing the body and saw God's plan unfold before their eyes. An angel descended from heaven and rolled back the stone that was blocking the entrance of the tomb that contained the body of Jesus. Then the angel told the women not to be afraid but to rejoice that Jesus had risen from the dead. As they were returning, Jesus appeared to them and gave them a similar message for the disciples. This message is the same for me and you: We can have life everlasting if we want God's plan.

As this day comes to a close, we need to prepare ourselves for tomorrow, the glorious day when we, too, can look into the tomb and find Jesus has risen. He speaks to us just as he spoke to his disciples some 2,000 years ago, and we will see him after our death if we believe in God's plan of salvation. Remember the words of hope from the heavenly angel, "Do not be afraid, I know you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised" (Mt 28:5-6). Happy Easter, indeed, Christ has risen!

Reflection Questions:

What would be your message to others after you looked into the tomb?

How will you live your life knowing God's salvific plan?

Reflection by Deacon Michael J. Green, St. Francis Xavier Parish, Lake Station.