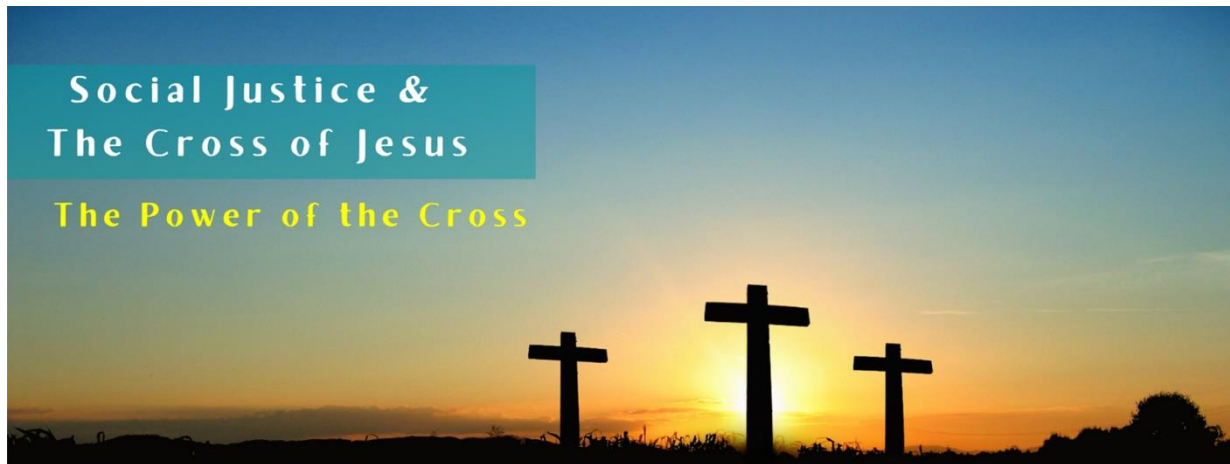


SOCIAL JUSTICE & THE CROSS OF JESUS  
REFLECTION 3 – THE POWER OF THE CROSS



**SAINT PAUL'S LETTER FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS**

In his First Letter to the Corinthians,  
Paul had written to the Christian sisters and brothers in the Greek city of Corinth.  
It was a community with divisions.

***How did Paul address the factions and division in community?***

Paul appealed to them:

*"Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,  
by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
that all of you should be in agreement  
and that there should be no divisions among you,  
but that you should be united in the same mind and the same purpose"* 1:10

Let us recall what the divisions were about, and how Paul responded to them.

*"What I mean is that each of you says, 'I belong to Paul',  
or 'I belong to Apollos', or 'I belong to Cephas', or 'I belong to Christ.'  
Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you?  
Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"* 1:12-13

Paul stressed that we are not about factions,  
It was Jesus who was crucified for them.

***How did Paul respond to human wisdom that omitted the cross?***

Today some works of "wisdom" are silent about the injustices, immense suffering,  
terrible oppression and discrimination in the world.

There are works of "comfortable" wisdom, of "sanitized" wisdom.

There are works of wisdom and theologies  
that make us feel good and leave us undisturbed.

Paul spoke of the power of the cross of Christ:

*“For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power. For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” 1:17-18*

And he explained:

*“For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.” 1:22-25*

He explained that God

*“is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” 1:30*

and recalled his missionary approach to them

*“When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” 2:1-2*

***Does the Holy Spirit teach us, interpret for us, and help us to understand?***

*“For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God’s except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.” 2/11-13*

***What was Paul’s teaching to the Corinthians about the Eucharist?***

In First Corinthians chapter 11, Paul again addressed the divisions of the community, this time as they appeared at the celebration of the Eucharist.

In a spirit of solidarity and respect for the Eucharist, he challenged those who don’t share with others, and challenged those who get drunk at this sacred time.

*“Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!” 11:22*

Only after these challenges, did Paul proceed to speak of the Eucharist itself. He didn't mention the cross specifically here, having already done so in Chapters 1 and 2. He now speaks of the new covenant in the blood of Jesus. And that, every time we have Communion in the Eucharist, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

*"For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." 11:23-26*

In [2017 Pope Francis at the September 3<sup>rd</sup> Angelus reflected on Matthew's Gospel](#). and taught us about our participation in the Eucharist.

*"Each time we take part in the Holy Mass, the love of the crucified and Risen Christ is conveyed to us as food and drink, so that we may follow Him on the daily path, in concrete service to our brothers and sisters."*

In the next Reflection we shall ponder this quote and explore the Cross in the Gospels.

#### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

We conclude this reflection with **four** questions to ponder.

The questions are asked **personally**.

And then they are asked **communally**.

*How do I describe the power of the cross in my life? [pause, pray and reflect]*

*How does the Holy Spirit help me in my life's journey? [pause, pray and reflect]*

*When I gather for Eucharist, how is it a sacred experience of God's love in solidarity with me? [pause, pray and reflect]*

*How are the power of the cross, the daily presence of the Holy Spirit in my life's journey, and the celebration of Eucharist, all central to my life?? [pause, pray and reflect]*

*How do we describe the power of the cross in our lives? [pause, pray and reflect]*

*How does the Holy Spirit help us in our life's journey? [pause, pray and reflect]*

*When we gather for Eucharist, how is it a sacred experience of God's love in solidarity with us? [pause, pray and reflect]*

*How are the power of the cross, the daily presence of the Holy Spirit in our life's journey, and the celebration of Eucharist, all central to our lives? [pause, pray and reflect]*

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