

Good Friday
April 2, 2010
Fr. Bill McGinty

“The Hope of Hopes”

I have an old friend who lives in New Orleans, and has done so for thirty-two years. She married Malcolm in 1978, when we all students at London University. They had two children, boys and spent the next thirty years teaching high school. In 2007 their eldest boy left for college one day, handed in his paper, went down to the river, lay down on the levee and shot himself through the heart.

It did not make sense. No sense. Not to his parents, his friends, his teachers or anyone else. All the good times they shared, achievements, awards, Christmases, holidays together, all died on the levee that day.

There is nothing that ever makes a loss like this any way bearable. It does not get better. It does not go away, it stays and for the rest of their lives.

Days like that, in March 2007, are so dark in peoples lives that everything is marked from that day, when the doorbell rang in the afternoon and two police officers stood there.

I don't think any of us realize the enormity of Good Friday and its impact unless we had experience, a day like I described, either directly or happening to people we knew. For Mary, John and the women around the cross, it could not have made sense. On that Friday night, Mary knew that her life was over.

Death has that kind of impact on us. Good Friday is all about death. There is no hope, no light and no sense about Good Friday. Jesus dies a cruel death and we all stand by helpless.

Yet, we all know that Jesus' death on the cross was neither dark nor meaningless. For what really died that day was the kingdom of darkness, the beginning of the end for evil, sin and hopelessness.

What was born on Good Friday was the light of hope. It is the hope of Resurrection. The hope of meaning. The hope of life, being once again victorious.

For on Good Friday, Jesus dies our eternal death or us, and leaves us with only the little death of falling asleep in the Lord. Falling asleep, but with the promise that Christ will be there on the other side, to raise us to Resurrection.

Resurrection. It is the hope of hopes. It is the dream of dreams. It is the deepest expression of our faith.

60 years ago the welsh poet wrote:
“Do not go gentle into that goodnight
Old age should rage at close of day.
Rage. Rage. Against the dying of the light.”

In the symbols of the cross, Jesus turns our rage into light. As we pray for all, who we have loved and lost tonight, I ask you to join with me in praying for Mona and Malcolm, my old college friends of 32 years, that the words of comfort. Jesus gave from the cross: “This day, you will be with me in Paradise.” Maybe words that give them comfort and peace.
Amen+