

Homily: 29<sup>th</sup> Sunday: Cycle B: 2021: Is 53:10-11; Ps. 33; Heb 4:14-16; Mk 10:35-45

***“Embracing our Cross in love and humility for the good of souls”***

1. We hear in the 1<sup>st</sup> reading today from the Book of the prophet Isaiah a passage about the Lord’s suffering servant, who is Jesus foreshadowed centuries before he came to earth. **Jesus is the one who offers His life in reparation for all the sins committed by mankind from the beginning of time until the end of time.** *“If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him. Because of his affliction, he shall see the light in fullness of days; through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear.”* By our Baptism we are called to share in the salvific mission of Jesus the Head of Church as members of His Mystical Body, and so when we offer, in union with Jesus, our daily sufferings, acts of penance and self-denial, and prayers and supplications for the salvation of souls – we generously help Him bring that reality about. **Uniting them also in company with Our Blessed Mother increases those graces for souls as She adds her own merits and graces as our Spiritual Mother to assist Jesus in that work of the salvation of souls.** That again is the core message our Lady gave us at Fatima: to offer our life with her to help save hardened sinners. **Are we daily doing that?**
2. **Jesus sympathizes with us in all of our sufferings here on earth, be they mental, physical, emotional or spiritual. Mary does as well.** But the Lord Jesus always changes what is difficult into something beautiful – if we allow Him to work. And He calls us to embrace our Cross in love for it is so spiritually valuable. As it says in the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading from Hebrews: *“He was tested in every way, yet without sin. So we can confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.”* Do we turn to the Lord when we suffer? Or do we try to bear it ourselves? And over time become bitter and angry because of it? We are definitely going through a time of testing in our current time with all the craziness that has been manifested with the Covid pandemic collectively and then also in our individual lives and circumstances. There are so many spiritual opportunities to offer many pains, and sufferings and difficulties to the Lord for the good of souls: our own and others. I am reading a new book about St. Padre Pio, the Italian Franciscan Capuchin priest who had the stigmata or wounds of Christ in

his body from the time he was 31 until he died at the age of 79. And then mysteriously the wounds disappeared when he was laid out in his coffin. Very interesting. Not sure what that meant other than possibly his mission of redemptive suffering was completed and now he is sharing in Jesus's resurrection in his soul in Heaven. The book is written by the famous exorcist priest Fr. Gabrielle Amorth who knew Padre Pio for many decades before he died in 1968. It's just a little book and easy to read, but the main message is how Padre Pio embraced suffering and the mystery of the Cross in his life as a priest and how he offered his life daily to the Lord in company with our Lady for the conversion of sinners and for the souls in Purgatory. As people always were asking Padre Pio for his prayers for healings from various sufferings, he said something interesting about that: *"All have their cross; all ask that it be taken away. But if they knew how precious it is, they would be asking that it be given to them not taken away"* (page 55). Let's ask Padre Pio to help us generously embrace our cross for the good of souls.

3. **Jesus tells James and John in the Gospel today that if they want to reign with Him they have to embrace the same Cup of suffering that He is going to embrace for souls.** We all do this is a unique way based on our vocation in life, our strengths and weaknesses of character, and temperament and health. It is prepared and guided by the Lord and the prayers of our Lady to bring us to salvation and hopefully many souls with us. **As I have mentioned in homilies and talked to some of you in person, it is not an easy time to bring people to the Faith** We have so many lapsed Catholics in our midst as well as people who do not practice any Faith. Yes we can lose our Faith if we are not spiritually careful. So many say they believe in God; but so do the devils as Padre Pio famously said. We can point people to the gift of Faith; but you can't give people Faith - that only comes from God and people have to accept it. But for those of us who have the Faith, how can we still help people who have lost the Faith for whatever reason; or never had it? **By daily praying and suffering for them, in love:** as St. Padre Pio said, *"If only people knew how much a soul costs. Souls are not given as a gift, they are bought. You have no idea how much they cost Jesus. And now it is still with the same coin, of suffering with love, that they must be purchased. The greatest form of charity is that of snatching souls from the grasp of satan in order to win them for Christ"* (page 63). God bless you.