

REFLECTION

By **Benita Amoako**, St. Joseph Worker Program NY

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:11-54)



When you hear "Lent," or "Stations of the Cross," what comes to mind? Is this just an annual season before the Easter festivities, or a must-follow ritual the Church demands of you? Or, is this a period you can truly focus and reflect on the mystery of God's love for mankind – and the mystery of one man's sacrifice and passion for all (including those He was yet to meet, like you and I)?

Some years ago, during a discussion among friends, one person asked, "what's the point of going through Lent and the Stations of the Cross all over again when Jesus did that already?" and the response was, "if we put ourselves through the Stations of the Cross meaningfully, we are able (even just for a few days) to put our feet in Christ's sandals so that we would also learn to love (even to death) all mankind; regardless of how often we are hurt in the process."

The Passion of Christ demonstrates how much we are loved and how far God will go to show love to us. Sometimes, I think Jesus may have wanted to change His mind while praying in Gethsemane, where he sought God in the midst of sorrow and distress. Sometimes, we also feel sorrow, anguish, and distress. If given the power, we would 'run out' of our lives. How often have we come to that point of not wanting to go any further? How often have we thought, "I'm not sure I can do this"? I know I have. Jesus turned to God for comfort and reassurance. Who do you turn to during the tough times?

Focus: SPIRITUALITY

When everyone Jesus knew had either 'sold Him off,' denied Him, or run away for their own safety, it must have felt as though He had been abandoned by those he had thought loved Him so dearly. Even today, there are people all around us who feel abandoned and do not know where or who to turn to.

Today, as we ask Jesus where He would like to celebrate Passover, His response is: "I would like to celebrate Passover in your heart." Have you prepared your heart for the Passover feast? If we also ask Jesus, "who would you like to celebrate it with?" I am sure His response is: "the lonely, the broken, the anxious, the weary, the frightened, and the sick and with you." As we prepare our own hearts for the Passover feast, let us extend Jesus' invitation to those in need on His behalf.

PRAYER

LORD, thank You for choosing my heart to celebrate the Passover; teach me to prepare my heart so that You would have the best Passover feast.

As I send out Your invitations, help me look out for the hearts that need You, help me look beyond the cover-up smiles; and as I give out these invitations of hugs, laughter, smiles, joy and comfort, may I remember to take my seat at the table to feast with You.

Amen!

SERVICE SUGGESTION

Journey with Jesus through the Stations of the Cross - may it not be out of a sense of obligation but because You know that Jesus needs a friend who will walk with Him through His rise and falls on this journey. Do not look too far, there may be someone closest to you who needs a friend or a listening ear for a short journey. As you take this journey, allow Jesus to prepare your heart not just for the Passover but for all His celebrations and may the way you speak and live give you away (like Peter's speech betrayed him).