

REFLECTION

By **Liz Fairchild**, Holy Child Volunteer Service

"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." - Luke 23:1-49



Today's Gospel reading depicts the Passion of Christ. The use of the word "Passion" to describe the death of Jesus speaks volumes. It could have easily been referred to by another name – the kind of name that placed blame on one or more groups of people involved. In calling His death the "Passion" we recognize the love God has for us since "passion," by definition, is a strong, barely containable emotion.

When we read today's Gospel we see an outpouring of love for these around Him during the Last Supper. Jesus prepares his disciples for what is to come, telling them to serve each other and not to worry. This call to service is a call to love and shows that even in his last hours Jesus was thinking of his people. Another example of love comes while Jesus was being questioned by the authorities. Jesus could have cursed them and rebuked them. But instead He says nothing. Yet another example of love can be seen when Jesus reveals to Peter that he will deny Him three times. Jesus, having known Peter from the beginning, knows that despite his initial responses Peter would remain faithful in the end. And that Peter could be relied upon even after denying Christ. Jesus could have spent his last hours alone or fought the authorities at every turn, but instead He chose to love them all with a passion, giving up his life so that we all might live.

Focus: SPIRITUALITY

We can see a clear example of spiritual growth when we examine the relationship between Peter and Jesus - a relationship based on love and trust.

When Peter is told that he will deny Christ, his initial reaction is one of shock and denial, having been a loyal friend and follower of Jesus.

You can imagine Peter's pain when Jesus's words come to fruition. It is by this suffering Peter grows in faith.

Peter could have easily chosen to distance himself from Christ from that night on, but instead has faith and becomes the Rock on which Christ build his church.

PRAYER

Lord, You have known me since time began.

You alone know my heart in its truest form.

Despite the challenges and suffering I may face, help me to stand firm in my faith in you. Allow me to be like Peter, your rock.

Give me the courage to know to seek you and to find you.

Allow me to walk with you and changed by your presence in me.

Let my will become yours and you'll become mine.

Amen.

WHO INSPIRES YOU TO SERVE?

The Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth are a congregation of vowed religious women who founded the Holy Family Service Corps. As a part of their volunteer program, I was given the chance to serve in a variety of roles, walking with minority populations through ministries sponsored by the Sisters. While I learned a lot by working in these ministries, I learned even more by forming friendships with the Sisters. I learned that Sisters and Religious are all people who are in many ways just like me.