

WALKING THE VIA DOLOROSA

Scripture: Hebrews 10:-16-25

Good Friday, April 10, 2020

Walking with Jesus on this last day of his earthly, human life, I remember walking the Via Dolorosa, the Way of Sorrow. I have participated in many services and rituals of *The Stations of the Cross* both as an Episcopalian and a Methodist. My first experience was opening night of my Cursillo (the Episcopal version of Road to Emmaus). It was after dinner and introductions when we went to the chapel for what I thought would be an Evening Prayer Service. It wasn't. It was the Stations of the Cross: scripture and a reading about each station. After this service, we retired, in silence, to our cells (we were in a monastery) for the night.

I had been overwhelmed by emotions during the readings. Never had the story of Jesus' last walk been so powerful. Until, that is, I walked the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem in April 1989. Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, walking these rough stone streets, bearing his cross, stumbling, falling, rising again and again as He willingly walks to his death. His death for me.

Women along the way wept for him. Tradition says one even reached out and wiped his face, trying to clean off the blood and sweat and tears. Others in the crowd reviled and mocked him. Where would I have been? How would I have behaved? Would I have had love and courage enough to go to him, to wipe his face? Or would I have been a part of the mob that shouted "Crucify"? Would I have stood watch on Golgotha with Mary and John?

It was not that long ago for us that we remember Mary "pondering all these things in her heart" after the visitation of the shepherds and then the Magi. Now she mourns. And so must we.

Prayer: Gracious loving God, on this most sorrowful of days, help us to mourn; to mourn our own sinful ways, and to mourn the death of your dearly beloved Son that those ways made necessary. Be with us through this darkness that joy may come in the morning. Amen.

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