

Reflection for Thursday of Holy Week 2020

The response to the psalm sets the scene for today's readings: "*How great is your name, O Lord our God, through all the earth!*" Reinforced by Peter who tells the people that the cripple received his healing through the power of the Name of Jesus. And, of course, the name Jesus means Saviour. The reason why the Jews do not use the name of God is because it would mean that they would have power over God which is impossible. In the case of Jesus, it is the reverse in using his name, in revering his name, in bowing in homage to his name gives Jesus full power over us. This is what we want – to be saved, to be given true life, to be set free from sin and all that harms us. Ultimately it all leads to the great wish we have for Peace. Enlightening the disciples in the upper room was not just about understanding the history of the Law and the Prophets but about uncovering its spirit, its purpose and its intention. He showed that God always, always, always keeps his promises. And just as Jesus summarised the Law and Prophets as the Love of God and Love of neighbour – being opened to the scriptures is about being opened to God's love expressed so intimately in Jesus. It is not so much learning about or understanding love but **experiencing** the Love of God for us. It was love that lay at the centre of Jesus power. It was this love that coursed through the heart and the body of the cripple and brought him new life. It is the same love that courses through our hearts and lives whenever we express our love for the Risen Jesus, and it not only renews his love within us but offers us new life.

One Solitary Life

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant. He grew up in another village, where he worked in a carpenter shop until he was 30. Then, for three years, he was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a home. He didn't go to college. He never lived in a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where he was born. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself.

He was only 33 when the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for his garments, the only property he had on earth. When he was dead, he was laid in a borrowed grave, through the pity of a friend.

Twenty centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure of the human race. I am well within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned--put together--have not affected the life of man on this earth as much as that one, solitary life.

*Attributed to James Allen Francis.

End Note: A husband and wife were driving through Louisiana. As they approached Natchitoches, they started arguing about the pronunciation of the town. They argued back and forth, then they stopped for lunch. At the counter, the husband asked the waitress, "Before we order, could you please settle an

argument for us? Would you please pronounce where we are very slowly?" She leaned over the counter and said, "Burr-gerrr Kiiing."