

LOVE IS STRONGER THAN DEATH

As we begin to walk with Jesus through this holiest week of the year—watch and listen—in the stillness of your own heart. And feel the effects of his mercy. Find some moments of silence this week. Be still. Why? Because silence alone replenishes our inner spirit and opens the deeper dimensions of our lives to the truth. And it is the truth which truly sets us free.

Each year here at Saint Anthony's we have anywhere from fifty-five to seventy funerals. In my years here I have probably laid to rest close to a thousand parishioners. Over the years there are certain things I remember to say at every funeral. One such thing is this. "Love is stronger than death. At the time of Jesus in his resurrection. Then. Now and Forever. Love is stronger than death." It is. But...

Only when someone values love more than life, and puts life second for the sake of love, only then can love be more than and stronger than death itself. Pope Benedict XVI once wrote: "Jesus' total love for men which leads him to the cross is perfected in total stepping over to the Father and precisely then becomes stronger than death because this is also Jesus' being held by the Father." Have you ever thought of the whole passion of Christ as his having been held by his Father?

This is the week called holy. It is the end game of Jesus' life and ministry. He raises Lazarus from the dead and gives him back to his sisters. He enters the city of David, Jerusalem, triumphantly riding as he is proclaimed by the people and palm branches are strewn before his path. He cleanses the Temple indicating the end of the order of corruption and the beginning of the new revelation and new worship. He is seized by the Temple police and after questioning by the High Priest himself he pronounces himself to be The Messiah. That proclamation is like signing his own death warrant.

They will get the Romans to kill him of course. We all know how it works. He dies a horrific death and undergoes merciless torture, He who is the Divine Mercy itself. He is taken from the cross and hastily wrapped and laid in a tomb. But on the third day He is no longer in the tomb. He is not there. He is risen! He lives! Those who loved Him and believed in Him begin to see Him, experience Him, and sense He is present with them and among them. He lives nevermore to die. He lives. He loves. He forgives. He becomes love itself—stronger than death.

In effect He says—
This is who I am.
I am the Good Shepherd.
I am the Vine.
I am the Sheepgate.
I am the Way, the Truth and The Life.
I am the Bread of Life.
I am the Resurrection and the Life.
I am who Am.
I am Love itself.
I am what Love looks like
I am what Love is.