

“A Place to Shed Tears”

Luke 22:14-19

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Communion Devotion

It seemed everywhere Pope Francis went on his tour of our country, his words were appropriate and powerful. The way he balanced his message by being prophetic and pastoral was masterful. Only a person with a keen mind, warm heart and a passion for justice and peace could do what he did.

Perhaps this is why he was so well received. His wisdom, sincerity and authenticity were on full display everywhere he went. People from all walks of life took notice of his visit and listened to what he had to say.

His words at the Ground Zero Memorial in Lower Manhattan captured my attention and heart. Standing in the underground chamber where one of the tower's foundation still stands and holds memorabilia from that fateful day, Pope Francis uttered these words.

“This is a place where we shed tears. We weep out of a sense of helplessness in the face of injustice, murder and the failure to settle conflicts through dialogue.

Here we mourn the wrongful and senseless loss of innocent lives because of the inability to find solutions which respect the common good. This flowing water reminds us of yesterday's tears, but also of all the tears still being shed today.”

Pope Francis' words are as appropriate in our sanctuary this morning as they were at Ground Zero. As our attention turns toward the communion table, I, too, can say, “This is a place where we shed tears.”

This is a place where we remember an innocent man who died at the hands of his enemies.

This is a place where we are reminded that the voices of selfishness and greed collided with the voice of justice, calling all people to live by an ethic of love, most commonly known as the Golden Rule.

This is the place where we come face to face with those who made the decision to abruptly and violently silence the voice of this prophet who spoke on behalf of the disenfranchised while challenging those who were exploiting them to repent.

This is the place where the bar of faithfulness was raised to a new level.

“Remember me,” Jesus said to his disciples as they gathered in the Upper Room for the Last Supper. Like the disciples who shared the common loaf and cup with one another, we remember Jesus’ life, ministry and death today, and we do so with tears in our hearts, if not our eyes. We remember Jesus with a profound sense of gratitude for his courage and compassion.

Yes, without a doubt, “this is a place where we shed tears.”

I suspect this is not the only place where you shed tears. **Where are the other places you cry?**

Where are you confronted with broken dreams and shattered hopes? Where do you encounter disappointment and dismay? Where do you feel the sharp pains of guilt and remorse? Where do you relive life’s toughest trials?

Is it a room in your house where you were abused? Is it a part of town where you once lived before your marriage fell apart? Is it in the hallway at school or in a classroom? Is it a hospital where you received a bad diagnosis? Is it a cemetery where a loved one is buried?

What do you do when your heart is broken and your spirit is crushed? “Remember me,” Jesus said to his disciples that night according to Luke. (22:19)

I have a feeling Jesus was not just talking about remembering him whenever they broke bread and shared the cup in a communion service, but he was also encouraging them to

remember him when their hearts were broken and their dreams collapsed. In these critical times, Jesus would draw close to offer comfort, strength, courage and a path forward.

Let me encourage you to do this, too. Hope and healing are vital parts of our faith. This is why Jesus is often referred to as 'The Great Physician'.

Allow God to have the final word in your life because it will be good. If God can reach into a sealed and guarded tomb to give new life to his beaten and bruised Son, God can do the same for you.

One of my dear friends in my former church, Coach Buck, shared something with me he recently heard. "With God, everything works out in the end. If it hasn't worked out yet, it isn't the end."

Invite Jesus into the place where you shed tears. He can make a difference.