A GOOD FRIDAY MEDITATION

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

The veneration of the cross of Jesus Christ reminds me of a Good Friday story. For the veneration of the cross in his parish, a priest provided a coffin in place of the cross. He had a large mirror fixed in the coffin. As parishioners filed passed and peeped inside the coffin, each one saw nothing but his/her own image. The experience was very emotional, and almost everybody returned to his/her pew sobbing.

This story provides us with several lessons, but let us limit ourselves to three of them. Firstly, as one sees his/her image in the coffin, one becomes more conscious of the fact that Jesus Christ has died in his/her stead. Today’s first reading captures this message: “**he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; … he was wounded for our sins, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed**” (Isaiah 53:4-5). Beloved, let us, therefore, express heartfelt gratitude to Jesus who has died for us. Our lives should be lived in constant thanksgiving to the Lord. That is, our daily thoughts, words, actions and inactions should be in accordance with his will.

Secondly, since one sees his/her image and not that of Jesus in the coffin, he/she should weep not for Jesus but for him/herself. Thus, Jesus told the weeping women of Jerusalem: “Daughters of Jerusalem, **weep not for me, but for yourselves and your children**” (Luke 23:28). It was as if Jesus was telling them: “yes, you see my distorted and bloody face, my pierced and aching head, my tortured and weakened body, my crashed and wobbling limbs; but my sufferings are for just a few hours. Yours would be for all eternity if you don’t give up your sins, for the wages of sin is eternal death.” Beloved, as we appreciate the fact that the Lord suffered and died in our stead, let us detest sin and avoid the near occasion of sin.

Thirdly, whoever saw his/her image in the coffin, still walked away alive. Beloved, this means that if we die with Christ, we shall arise with him. Therefore, with Christ, we can look into the future with so much hope: even death will not be our end, but the beginning of the best part of our lives, and not for a short while, but for all eternity! Amen!