GOOD FRIDAY
FAITH MUNDELEIN -- 1983

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IN NOMINE JESU

ISAIAH 52: 13 -- 53: 12

"APRIL FOOLS DAY," we call it.... And so did they -- back then -- on that first GOOD FRIDAY." "DAMNED FOOL," they cried at Him. And you can take that quite literally -- for in that moment and hour HE WAS DAMNED -- DOOMED TO THE TORMENT AND ANGUISH OF HELL -- and this was none other than THE FOOLISHNESS OF GOD -- GOD HIMSELF SPLITTING APART LIKE THE UNSPLITABLE ATOM -- "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTANI - MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?" "DAMNED FOOL," they cried. "HE SAVED OTHERS; HIMSELF HE CANNOT SAVE." And wagging their heads, they taunted, "HAIL, KING OF THE JEWS!!! IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD, COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS AND THEN WE WILL BELIEVE IN YOU!!! ..... DAMNED FOOL....LOOK AT HIM!"

The WRENCHING VIOLENCE increases in intensity. It THROBS and TWISTS relentlessly - determined to EXHAUST and DESTROY its Victim. It DISFIGURES as it DESTROYS. His appearance is "MARRED BEYOND HUMAN SEMBLANCE." There is "NO FORM OR COMELINESS IN HIM THAT WE SHOULD REGARD HIM -- NO BEAUTY THAT WE SHOULD DESIRE HIM --- HE WAS DESPISED AND REJECTED!"

There is no way to FULLY CAPTURE the DEPTH and the BREADTH of the SHAME. David's poignant, "O ABSALOM, MY SON! MY SON, ABSALOM! WOULD GOD I HAD DIED FOR THEE, ABSALOM, MY SON! MY SON!" touches the nerve center. The CRIES of the MOTHERS traumatized by the SLAUGHTER OF THEIR INNOCENTS is something like it.... All of HOLOCAUST is there -- MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN!

One would think that the GENIUS OF PEOPLE to TORTURE and KILL would soon be exhausted. NOT SO! The RESOURCES OF CRUELTY ARE LIMITLESS -- and throughout the ages they have been ORCHESTRATED with all the demonic NUANCES of CONDUCTORS like HITLER, HIMMLER, STALIN, EICHMANN - the MAN DOWN THE STREET - YOU AND I!..... DEEPER - DEEPER than we

we cace To believe or imagine lie the ROOTS OF SIN! They THRIVE and SEND UP SAP and PRODUCE THE BLACK FRUIT OF HELL!

IT IS SOMETIMES "HELL" BEING A PROPHET -- IN THE SERVICE OF THE MOST HIGH GOD! That is made CRYSTAL CLEAR in these "SUFFERING SERVANT" Songs here in Isaiah. In them a SERVANT, who is not clearly identified, TOOK UPON HIMSELF VOLUNTARILY the suffering that should have been meted out to his tormentors. Whoever this CORPORATE PERSONALITY WAS, he embodied in himself the transgressions and iniquities of his people.... And so it is throughout the Scriptures. ASK MOSES -- up there on the Holy Mountain -- after the Great God had so miraculously rescued these REFUGEE SLAVES from their slavery in Egypt. He wanted to BLESS THEM beyond imagination and GIVE THEM ALL THE SECRETS OF LIFESTYLE and the WHOLE BUSINESS. He got Moses to WRITE IT ALL DOWN on CLAY TABLETS to give to them. You see, GOD was SO FULL OF LOVE for these REFUGEE SLAVES that He was willing to tell them EXACTLY WHAT HIS WILL WAS for them. HE wanted to BRIDGE THE GAP right then and there between HIS HEART and THEIRS -- and LET THEM IN on the WAY TO BRING THE HUMAN WILL in CLOSE HARMONY with the DIVINE WILL. He was willing to SPELL IT ALL OUT right there on those tablets. And HE DID, TOO -- Except that by the time Moses put down his stylus and made his way back down, the whole lot of them had MADE THEMSELVES A gOD -- A LOT OF BULL REALLY.... GOD WAS FURIOUS. HE WAS READY TO DESTROY THEM ALL -- the INGRATES! MOSES went back up the Holy Mountain. He kneeled down and he pleaded and prayed - interceding for his people: "FORGIVE THEM, LORD - FORGIVE THEM -- OR ELSE BLOT MY NAME OUT OF YOUR BOOK."..... Ask ISAIAH and JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL and DANIEL, HOSEA and JOEL and AMOS and all the rest of them.... They'll tell you all about the SUFFERING and HEARTACHE and SORROW and PAIN that goes along with being a PROPHET -- a SUFFERING SERVANT OF THE MOST HIGH GOD! And in one way or another they all PREFIGURE and POINT FORWARD TO the EVENTS OF GOOD FRIDAY and the CRUCIFIXION.

When all is said and done, WE ARE THE FOOLS. WE PUT HIM THERE -- WE NAILED HIM TO THE CROSS -- WE CRUCIFIED HIM. It was OUR SIN - (YOURS and MINE -) OUR REBELLION --

OUR BROKEN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND WITH OURSELVES -- OUR COLD, CALLOUSED HEARTS OF STONE that PUT HIM THERE! WE CRUCIFIED OUR LORD! WE DID IT!.... "SURELY HE HAS BORNE OUR GRIEFS AND CARRIED OUR SORROWS." - "HE WAS WOUNDED FOR OUR TRANSGRESSIONS, HE WAS BRUISED FOR OUR INIQUITIES." - "BY OPPRESSION AND JUDGMENT HE WAS TAKEN AWAY." - "HE BORE THE SINS OF MANY" - "ALL WE LIKE SHEEP HAVE GONE ASTRAY; WE HAVE TURNED EVERYONE TO HIS OWN WAY!"

WE PUT HIM THERE! BUT GOD PUT HIM THERE TOO! GOD PUT HIM THERE because of US! "GOD MADE HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN TO BE MADE SIN FOR US" - "HE WAS STRICKEN, SMITTEN OF GOD AND AFFLICTED" - "THE LORD HAS LAID ON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL" - "IT WAS THE WILL OF THE LORD TO BRUISE HIM; HE HAS PUT HIM TO GRIEF; HE MAKES HIM AN OFFERING FOR SIN."

One thing is for sure -- NO ONE CAN GO TO CALVARY AND EVER AGAIN MINIMIZ THE WRATH AND ANGER OF GOD! THE HOLY GOD IS NOT SOME DECREPIT OLD GRANDFATHER WHO "WINKS HIS EYE AT SIN" AND PASSES IT ALL OFF WITH A SHRUG OF THE SHOULDER! .... LOOK AT THE CROSS - BEHOLD THE MAN, THE CRUCIFIED ONE, "THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!" LOOK AT HIM and ask yourself, "DOES GOD MAKE LIGHT OF OUR SIN? - 'IS IT NOTHING TO YOU, ALL YOU WHO PASS BY?'"

FOR US (MEN) AND FOR OUR SALVATION HE CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN! FOR US (MEN) AND FOR OUR SALVATION HE WAS BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY! FOR US (MEN) AND FOR OUR SALVATION HE SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE! FOR US (MEN) AND FOR OUR SALVATION HE WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED, AND WAS BURIED! FOR US (MEN) AND FOR OUR SALVATION HE DESCENDED INTO THE REALM OF THE DEAD! FOR US (MEN) AND FOR OUR SALVATION HE ALLOWED US TO MAKE A FOOL OF HIM - TO MOCK AND DERIDE HIM - TO SPIT ON HIM AND CURSE HIM - TO CROWN HIM WITH THORNS AND CRUCIFY HIM! HE ALLOWED IT ALL and ENDURED IT ALL FOR US (MEN) AND FOR OUR SALVATION!

In the STILLNESS OF ETERNITY did you ever HEAR A HEART BREAK? In the CHILL OF INFINIT did you ever HEAR THE HEART OF GOD BREAK? "I HAVE GIVEN THE BELOVED OF MY SOUL INTO THE HAND OF THE ENEMY." GOD BROKE HIS OWN HEART -- and then, at the last, OUT OF BLACKNESS AND DARKNESS HOVERING OVER THE CRUCIFIED -- at last there comes the cry: "I T I S F I N I S H E D !" And suddenly the HOWLING HOSTS OF HELL ARE HUSHED INTO SILENCE! And all who are in HEAVEN, and on EARTH, and UNDER THE EARTH are forced to ask: "WHO'S THE GREATEST FOOL AT LAST????? WHO?"

The LOVE OF GOD PURSUED US - EVERYONE - to the HILL WHERE THE CROSS STANDS. What does it mean to us that IT IS FINISHED? NOT WITH ARMIES CELESTIAL or (APOCALYPTIC CATACLYSM)- NOT WITH SWORDS LOUD CLASHING nor VENGEANCE - NOT REBUKE nor JUSTICE nor JUST DESERTS --(THE STRIFE IS O'ER, THE BATTLE DONE! I T I S F I N - I S H E D !) LOVE PURSUED SIN AND EVIL, CORRUPTION, IGNORANCE, REBELLION, AND PRIDE ALL THE WAY TO CALVARY and NAILED THEM TO THE CROSS..... WE HAVE DONE OUR WORST..... MAN CAN DO NO WORSE THAN HE HAS ALREADY DONE... I T I S F I N I S H E D ..... NO ANGELIC ARMIES APPEARING IN THE CLOUDS WON THIS BATTLE! N O - GOD JUST BROKE HIS HEART -- AND I T I S F I N I S H E D ------

THE STRIFE IS O'ER, THE BATTLE DONE;
THE VICTORY OF LIFE IS WON;
THE SONG OF TRIUMPH HAS BEGUN,
I T I S F I N I S H E D !

THE POWERS OF DEATH HAVE DONE THEIR WORST,
BUT CHRIST THEIR LEGIONS HAS DISPERSED;
LET SHOUTS OF HOLY JOY OUTBURST
I T I S F I N I S H E D !

I don't know about you, but I can never come to a GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE without walking away in SHEER WONDERMENT. THE LOVE OF GOD is always such an AMAZING AND ASTONISHING MYSTERY AND MIRACLE..... THE SUFFERING SERVANT - THE CHRIST - ACTUALLY AGREES WITH WHAT HAPPENS TO HIM -- AGREES THAT GOD SHOULD BE AGAINST HIM if that is the ONLY WAY TO HELP THE TRANSGRESSORS.... In fact, HIS OFFERING becomes an INTERCESSION for the very TRANSGRESSORS who PUT HIM ON THE CROSS.... HIS REWARD is that HE WILL RECEIVE THOSE WHO IMPOSED THE SUFFERING - THOSE WHO HAD NO USE FOR HIM.

"KINGS SHALL SHUT THEIR MOUTHS BECAUSE OF HIM; FOR THAT WHICH WAS NOT TOLD THEM THEY SHALL SEE, AND THAT WHICH THEY HAVE NOT HEARD THEY SHALL UNDERSTAND.".....

FOR US (MEN) AND FOR OUR SALVATION ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD .... FOR US (MEN) AND FOR OUR SALVATION HE SHALL COME AGAIN TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.....

cry St John in the Apocalypse

"THEN I LOOKED, AND I HEARD AROUND THE THRONE.... THE VOICE OF MANY ANGELS, AND THE NUMBER OF THEM WAS TEN THOUSAND TIMES TEN THOUSAND AND THOUSANDS OF THOUSANDS, SAYING WITH A LOUD VOICE, 'WORTHY IS THE LAMB WHO WAS SLAIN TO RECEIVE POWER AND RICHES AND WISDOM AND MIGHT AND HONOR AND GLORY AND BLESSING.' AND I HEARD EVERY CREATURE IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH AND IN THE SEA SAYING, 'TO HIM WHO SITS UPON THE THRONE AND TO THE LAMB BE BLESSING AND HONOR AND GLORY AND MIGHT FOREVER AND EVER.'"

Amen!!!