5th Wednesday in Lent
Rolling Meadows - 1965

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IN NOMINE JESU

St. John 19: 28, 29 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a spunge wit vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth.

THE WORD OF HUMAN NEED

The events on Calvary move in rapid succession now. The cup which the Father had given the Son to drink was all but empty. The Scriptures still needed to be fulfilled on certain matters - to us perhaps unimportant - but eternally important to God. Psalm 110 reminds us that this mighty Savior would drink of th brook by the way. He is shown in His great battle on man's behalf. As the enemy is put to flight, He pursues, and in order to summon His last full strength and to draw upon all His resources He stoops by the way for a drink. And out of the darkness of Calvary we hear Jesus cry, I thirst. This is in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. So often this sounds as though there had been a script written in advance, and Jesus was here following the script like an actor in a drama. There was that, to be sure, but not in the sense in which we might imagine. This was not make-believe or just play-acting. The script was written in advance because God's promises are of old. But Jesus really was everything that had been promised of old - so that you can look at His whole life, everythir He did and everything He said, and you will find no detail in which He is not the promised Messiah. He fulfilled the Scriptures because they testified of Him fron the beginning. He cried out, I thirst, because it was just this suffering thirst on the Cross of which the Scriptures spoke. Listen to what the Scriptures said of Him: Ps. 22 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart i like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and My tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me unto the dust of death.

What does Jesus' cry mean for us? Surely we are reminded once more tha we are at the place of unbelievable suffering, inhuman torture, and depths of agony that we cannot begin to fathom. For all of our whys, we could never cry out as Jesus does here. No one can except the damned in hell. The damned in hell! In hell the rich man lifted up his eyes and pleaded with Abraham to send

Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and let one drop from it fall upon his tongue, for he was in terrible torment. When you hear Jesus cry out, I thir you know where He has been, and you know where you should have gone - but becaus He suffered even this thirst for you, He was able to carry off the gates of hell as mighty Samson carried off the gates of Gaza.

When the storm clouds of life are black, and the suffering is great, a someone comes to you and says, Jesus knows! He has been through it all before you! He will help you bear your affliction! -- do you really believe that? Isn this where our faith begins to falter, and we fall into the doubt of unbelief? How can Jesus really know what I am going through? And so we shrug Him off in order to sit alone with our grief and wallow in our misery. We are always tempt to look at Christ as something less than true man, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. We always like to think that He had resources to draw on that are no available to us - and that therefore He cannot really know what we are going through. This is why we have certain reservations even with regard to His being forsaken of God. It just cannot be, not in any real sense of the word. There w always the hidden support there; there was always the certainty that He was the Son of God and could come down from the Cross.

This is not true, but it is one of the last and clever devices of the devil by which he would bring us to persist in doubt until it becomes unbelief. The devil tempted Christ to doubt that He was the Son of God because He was as bound as we are. If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Jesus was hungry, hungrier than we ever get. This shouldn't be for the Son of God. Do something about it if You are the Son of God. Jesus, however, will have none of it, and He persists, not by adducing any proof that He is the Son of God and thereby doing exactly what the devil wanted - but by holding on in faith, the only proper relation with God that there is. Hence the response that defeats Satan: Man shall not live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Jesus Christ was true man, and as such He use no more than we have: faith by which He could overcome - the same faith by which

we also can overcome.

But if we know anything about the devil at all, we must know that he never gives up. He comes back again and again, pounding away at us until he is able to make a breach in the wall of our defense. He tries this also with Jesus In the wilderness it was an appeal to Jesus' hunger; here on Calvary it is an appeal to Jesus' thirst. In both instances Jesus had every right to doubt that He was the Son of God. Who would have blamed Him if he had created water there the spot to relieve His thirst - that His senses might again have something to hold to, something besides bare faith? He has every reason to think that He is forsaken of God - that if He is the Son of God He should come down from the Cros - that God has forsaken Him there - that this agonizing thirst shows that His body is being left to perish in hell. Do something!

And Jesus cries out, I thirst! He is true man for man's sake, and He will overcome as man in order that He might overcome for man. Can He be the Son of God? They give Him vinegar to drink, but not without pointing to His shame a using it as an occasion for more mockery. Let's see if Elias will come and take Him down from the Cross! And everyone had a good laugh because He had helped others and now could not even quench His own thirst. He has claimed to be the Son of God! That's a good one - the Son of God must cry out, I thirst!

Faith bows very low here because this is indeed the Son of God, our Savior. Even in His thirst He remained true and faithful to God's Will. He woul not use means not available to us whom He had come to save. Flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bones, He overcame the devil, who overcomes me by appealing to my needs, my hungers, and my thirsts. He suffered thirst that I might drink the water of life. The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth sa Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.... And Jesus said unto them, He that believeth on Me shall never thirst....Jesus said to the woman at Jacob's well: Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall

give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman said unto Him: Sir, give me this water! Will this be our earnest prayer tonight? Sir, give me this water! Here is the assurance of forgiveness, life, and salvation. You need it. Jesus has it. Please believe it. Amen.