**Holy Cross-C1 Rechoose and Be Free**

Jesus started off much like many of us in this world: bound in swaddling clothes, held in a mother's protective embrace, placed in a wooden baby bed, vulnerable, weak and dependent. Why would our all-powerful God submit to such a state? In order to give us a chance a chance to rechoose communion with God.

Victor Frankl in his book, “Man's Search for Meaning,” says the following: “*Everything can be taken from a man but one thing, the last of the human freedoms, to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own response*.”

Back before we could even record history, in the beginning of our existence with God, humanity was faced with the circumstance of being utterly dependent on God. (Sort of like a baby in its mother's arms.)

Faced with this reality that we were not independent creatures, not our own gods, we fell for the temptation to grasp at becoming equal to God. We chose to respond to our discomfort at being dependent by saying “no” to God's will.

Thus, sin entered the world, and we broke our communion with God.

Now some Christian theologians over the years have incorrectly taught that this “no” on humanity's part eliminated any point of contact between God and us.

Protestant theologian Karl Barth put it this way:

“There can be no continuity between revelation and creation since creation as destroyed by sin reveals only God's “no.”. The hidden God of Christian revelation can never be discovered directly in human history or experience, both of which are deeply scarred by sin.”

When these theologians look at humanity the first thing they see is sin. Not so with us Catholics.

While we do not minimalize sin and its power to kill our relationship with God and one another, we Catholics also do not see it as the first principle of our existence with God. Rather we believe that simply by virtue of being created we are fundamentally graced. We believe we still have an innate capacity to respond to God's compassion, to say “yes” to God's offer of communion with Holy Trinity.

We Catholics believe God creates us with the freedom to choose our responses, yet God also loves us beyond our imagining and wants us to be in communion with him.

So how can God preserve both our freedom to say, “yes or no” and God's desire to reconnect us in communion?

In the book, “The Cross in Our Context,” theologian Douglas Hall explains: “*What God is determined to save is not an abstraction and not a savable part of the whole, but the real world in its inseparable oneness and interrelatedness. [God wants to save it all!] A God who simultaneously wills the existence of free creatures and the preservation and redemption of the world is a God who will not impose rectitude upon the world, but labor to bring existing wrong into the service of the good; a God, in short, who will suffer*.”

So, in plain speak what does this mean? Jesus’ binding of swaddling clothes is replaced by the binding his hands by the temple guard. The wood of Jesus’ baby crib is replaced by the wood of the cross. The protective embrace of his mother Mary at Bethlehem becomes her sorrowful embrace at Calvary. And the vulnerability of a new life is replaced by the self-emptying sacrifice of his life on a cross.

Then on the third day the shackles of our ancient ‘no” to God are shattered by the power of God's yes to Jesus’ trust, God’s yes to Jesus' obedience, God’s yes to Jesus’ self-offering.

Through resurrection Jesus reconnects our humanity with the living communion of God!

Joined to Jesus Christ by baptism we too have the opportunity to reconnect to God. This is what we celebrate and renew every time we gather at this altar to pray.

Louisville priest, Fr Ron Knott, once wrote: “*Our first response does not have to be our life response. Truly the last great freedom is the ability to choose one's attitude in any set of circumstances, to choose or rechoose one's own response.*”

It has been said, “You can’t go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are at and change the ending.”

Through the cross of Jesus Christ, we are given a chance to rechoose communion with God, to change our ending. Rechoose and be free!