**2017 4 09**

**“Thought for the Week”**

***…*** ***The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”***

My beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ,

 As we enter this great and Holy Week, Blessed Paul is confirming that our Lord indeed is at hand. He is coming to us, lowly and humble, riding on a donkey. He comes to us as we become like Him, and humble ourselves before the world. When we forgive the unforgivable, when we act gently towards someone who dislikes us, when we forget all of the wrongs done to us, then the Lord will lift us up. His grace will fill our hearts and then we will know that the Lord is at hand. His presence will be palpable in our prayers. When we pray He will be present before us and our prayers will ascend to heaven.

Beloved, let us enter into this kind of prayer- it is not difficult- but we must start with humility. The grace that is given to the humble is the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who will bring to remembrance the words and teachings of our Lord. It is the Holy Spirit who will give us peace. It is the Holy Spirit that will change our hearts, so that they enter into a state of thankfulness. This state is not dependent on any external circumstance-whether good or bad. It is a state that persists through suffering and through tribulation. It does not increase with joy nor diminish with sorrow.

Indeed, if we are in this state of thankfulness, all anxiety will flee from us. We cannot be anxious, for we trust God with all of our hearts and with all of our life. We know that he will use difficult circumstances to draw us closer to him. It might be a painful road, at times, but we know that there is light and joy very close at hand. It is like a surgical operation for appendicitis. We know that we will have to go through some difficulties and some pain. But we are confident that our pain will very shortly get better. We know that we will find our health and our peace again. We seem to easily trust physicians, but Who may I ask is more trustworthy than our God? He is our protector, our helper, and our Savior. He is our Hope- the hope that no person nor circumstance can take away from us.

My dear ones in Christ Jesus as we enter this blessed week, let us be certain that our Lord is at hand. He was and is and will always be with us. And as we pray these beautiful services starting with the raising of Lazarus, let us stand in the Fear of God, in Faith and in Love. It is Love that raised Lazarus from the dead, and we can be assured that He loves each one of us in this same way. Let us stand with fear and trembling before the incredible mystery of such Love. It is a love and a peace which “surpasseth all understanding.” I wish each one of you this profound joy in the coming week. Amen.