

12th Station of the Cross (Traditional), 13th Station (Modern) – Jesus dies on the Cross



“Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfill the Scripture: “I thirst.” A bowl full of vinegar stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, “It is finished”; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

~John 19: 26-30

It is finished would be much better translated as “It is accomplished .” What is it that is accomplished or finished? We get a hint in the story of the vinegar, or cheap wine. Often women would mix this with myrrh which dulls pain and offer it to the dying men. Jesus first refused this and faced his pain without defense. However, he did accept it the second time as he was losing consciousness, so as to stay fully conscious to his dying process. Other condemned criminals would have taken the first (to ease their torment) and passed on the second (so as not to prolong their horrific pain). So what is accomplished is full awareness leading to death of ego and full awakening to the life of the soul – the “resurrected” or “reborn” life. It is only through this process of facing suffering with full love (awareness), i.e. no defense – no dulling of the senses and experience that there is any expansion in consciousness. Only love, and only *Your* love – divinely given, is the healer of dualities and splits. This is what is accomplished.

The Crucifixion. El Greco. (1597 – 1600) Museo Nacional del Prado

- **What do you think “I thirst,” means? For what do you really thirst? Consider how often you have gone to a dry well to slake your thirst. Where is the only place you will find the water of Life and the wine of Divine Love?**
- **When you have hungered for understanding and insight, where have you gone to get it?**

It is not the wine of addiction that dulls and denies experience, but the wine of Divine Love and compassion to embrace all experience, that you desire..It is not bread and processed food you crave, but the very substance and body of Divine Wisdom and Truth. This is what is alluded to in the “Last Supper” when Jesus recognizes Self as Divine Love and Wisdom (Wine and Bread).

*S(He) whose proud light they have received,
And are enlightened by the sight of their Lord;
S(He) whose Immortal Food they have received,
That hath no failing,
And have drunk of the Wine
That giveth them neither thirst nor desire.
And they have glorified and praised,
With the Living Spirit,
The Father of Truth and the Mother of Wisdom.*

~Acts of Thomas 7

“I remember sitting day after day at the same table in a dull restaurant where I had to eat my lunch. There was a beautiful red rose in a small vase in the middle of the table, I looked at the rose with sympathy and enjoyed its beauty. Every day I talked with my rose. But then I became suspicious. Because while my mood was changing during the week from happy to sad, from disappointed to angry, from energetic to apathetic, my rose was always the same. And moved by my suspicion I lifted my fingers to the rose and touched it. It was a plastic thing. I was deeply offended and never went back there to eat.

We cannot talk with plastic nature because it cannot tell us the real story about life and death. But if we are sensitive to the voice of nature, we might be able to hear sounds from a world where man and nature both find their shape. We will never fully understand the meaning of the sacramental signs of bread and wine when they do not make us realize that the whole of nature is a sacrament pointing to a reality far beyond itself. “

~Henri J. M. Nouwen

