

## Passion Sunday 2022 “Enter into the Story”

Bishop Elect Frank Schuster

My friends, the Passion preaches itself and so my comments will be brief. However, we should all take time this Holy Week to prayerfully reflect on the Passion so to enter more fully into the story of our salvation. There is much happening in the Gospel with many people to identify with. I will focus my comments on one person that is only found in Luke’s Gospel, the Good Thief.

Tradition remembers his name as St. Dismas. And yes, the Church calls him a saint because the definition of a saint is someone who is in heaven. Dismas qualifies. He is a true inspiration to me because, he didn’t get a lot of things right in his life, but he got one thing right in the end, which was to ask Jesus to remember him in heaven. Dismas got more than he expected, however. Jesus turned and looked straight at him and said, “Amen, I say to you, this day you will be with me in paradise!” Isn’t that beautiful? It is by far one of my favorite moments in the Gospel of Luke, the thief who stole heaven. Not too many people know this but, like St. Jude, St. Dismas is a patron saint for lost causes. If you feel like you need a patron saint for a hopeless cause right now, consider praying through the intercession of St. Dismas. Pro tip. His email in-box is smaller than St. Jude’s because no one ever heard of him.

Why is the Good Thief mentioned here in Luke’s Gospel, but nowhere else? I think Luke wants us to see all of us represented in this man crucified next to Jesus. You see, throughout history, humanity continues to find new and more tragic ways to crucify ourselves by our sins. We condemn ourselves. We crucify ourselves. Our sentence corresponds to our crimes. When we find ourselves on the cross, where does Jesus want to be? Like in Luke’s Gospel, Jesus wants to be by our side on the cross. The passion, death and resurrection of our Lord reveals a divine conspiracy of a God who does in fact remember us, even in our darkest hour. This is why we call this week holy.

My friends, we have now entered Holy Week. I highly encourage us to enter into this story by making Holy Week a retreat experience for you, your friends and your family. Enter into this story by celebrating the Holy Triduum with us at St. Vincent de Paul. The Holy Triduum begins with Holy Thursday at 7 PM this Thursday Evening, followed by Good Friday at 7 PM Friday Evening. We will also have Stations of the Cross at 3 earlier in the day on Friday. The Triduum concludes with Easter Vigil at 8:30 PM this Saturday night. I invite you to make Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Vigil a retreat experience for you and your family so to stay awake with Jesus during Holy Week.

And so, let’s ask ourselves, when was that time when we felt the most God forsaken? When was that time when you felt like you were in the dark valley of the shadow of death? When was that time when you felt alone and abandoned, hungering for love and new life? My friend, this week is your week to journey with Jesus! Experience the depth of God’s love for you, that always remembers you, even from the cross itself.