September 28, 2019

Scripture

Luke 9:43-45
While they were all amazed at his every deed,
Jesus said to his disciples,
"Pay attention to what I am telling you.
The Son of Man is to be handed over to men."
But they did not understand this saying;
its meaning was hidden from them
so that they should not understand it,
and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

Our Scripture Reflection

Up to this point in the Gospel, the disciples have seen only the good times, including powerful speeches and several miracles. But betrayal, suffering and death? It just didn’t compute at this time for the disciples. There was an important lesson ahead for them and for us: no Cross, no Crown

Food for your Journey

In Vietnam, there was a prison — a POW camp — named Wah Loh. The name means “fiery forge.” The French had built the place originally, but the North Vietnamese used it to imprison and torture captured American pilots.
Wah Loh was a place of silence. The prisoners were strictly forbidden to communicate with one another, or even to see each other. That experience of utter aloneness and abandonment was among the most effective forms of torture.
“The most devastating experience,” one survivor admitted later, “was the silence which came after I had uttered a profound scream. It dawned on me that no one could hear me. I was alone.”
Still, the prisoners found a way to communicate with each other. It was called the Tap Code. Somehow, they agreed among them that the letters of the alphabet (minus “K,” for which “C” could just as well substitute) could be arranged in a grid of five rows and five columns. “Tap, pause, tap” — row one, column one — meant letter “A.” Five taps, then a pause, then five taps meant letter “Z.”

It took a very long time, but prisoners have no shortage of time. Over the years, they exchanged Bible verses, debated theology — even held mock presidential elections. Some of the prisoners used the Tap Code so often, they got callouses on their knuckles.

The guards knew what they were up to, but they never cracked the code. They would beat the men with the most calloused knuckles, but still, the prisoners kept on tapping.

The Tap Code was the prisoners’ lifeline. It told them they were not alone.

There are times in life when some of us may pass through “the fiery forge” — not a prisoner-of-war camp, but the fiery forge of suffering, pain or grief. For many people undergoing such painful experiences, the Tap Code that keeps them going is the music of the church — the great hymns of the faith and other spiritual songs.

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**A Prayer from the Heart**

Dear Jesus, You did nothing but love all people, even those who betrayed You and persecuted You. You forgave those who crucified You before You took Your last breath. Help me to endure my trials and sufferings in imitation of You. My I offer my pain up for the spiritual good of others. Amen