

SUNDAY OF THE PASSION (A)

Matthew 26:14—27:66

April 17, 2011

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Wichita, Kansas

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“His blood be on us and on our children!”

Those words are *chilling*. Those words are *horrific*. And with those words, the crowds accept *responsibility* for the cross. With those words, the crowds accept their *culpability* in Jesus’ death.

In our proclamation of The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, it is *every member of the congregation* who speaks those words of the people, ***“His blood be on us and on our children!”***

Spoken today, those words are *still chilling*. Those words are still *horrific*. And in declaring those words, *we* today accept *responsibility* for the cross. *We* today accept *our culpability* in Jesus’ death.

“His blood be on us and on our children!”

Of what more terrible crime could one be guilty, than the killing of God’s own Son?

And *we do that killing*. *We put Jesus on the cross* — whenever we put ourselves in God’s place and presume to be Lord over the world — or even over our own little corner of it — or simply Lord over ourselves.

We hammer the nails into Christ anew whenever we turn our backs and fail to help our neighbor in need. For Christ is found *precisely there* — *in the neighbor*.

We crucify our Lord anew, whenever we neglect his Word and live contrary to it.

The people cry, ***“His blood be on us and on our children!”*** And *we are the people*. *We are the guilty ones*.

But here is the Gospel dear friends. We cry out ***“His blood be on us and on our children!”*** And it is a cry of *guilt*. But Jesus turns it into a *promise*. A promise of *mercy*. A promise of *forgiveness*. A promise of *reconciliation* with God.

Because it is precisely *Christ’s blood on you*, which marks you for salvation. It is the *blood of Jesus* which *cleanses you from all your sin*. In a wondrous and marvelous way, you have been *washed in Christ’s blood*, and that blood makes you as clean as new-driven snow. In just a few moments, that blood will be poured out *for you* again, at this very altar.

“His blood be on us and on our children!”

Those words declare our guilt.

“His blood be on us and on our children!”

Those words hold the promise of our salvation.

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

