

A redefined relationship (Hebrews 10:16-25)

## How can we approach hope as we draw near to the cross?

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Annas isn't the only high priest who appears in the readings for Good Friday.

While the Passion narrative rightly lives at the heart of Good Friday liturgies, the reading from Hebrews 10 presents us with rich imagery of a present and future life with Christ as our high priest.

To "confess our hope without wavering" invites us into a powerful counterpoint to the grief and pain of the crucifixion narrative. The author of Hebrews is writing to people no doubt experiencing their own hard times. Including this text in the Good Friday liturgy makes space for those who do not wish to avoid the message of the cross but do wish to look through it with a vision of hope.

If Jesus' death and resurrection redefine our relationship with God, so too is our relationship to our own fears and failings redefined. How can we approach hope as we draw near to the cross?

- In Christ's death and resurrection, we encounter a new covenant, a new promise coming into being. It's a promise that Jesus is writing a new relationship, and the text is within our hearts and minds. How can we invite one another to share that inner text?

- God has chosen to become forgetful. Whatever we bring with us to Good Friday that troubles us about ourselves, in Christ God has chosen to remember those things no more. How can we assure one another that by the cross, we are embraced by a gracefully forgetful God?
- Because God isn't interested in offerings for sin, we live in the freedom to make offerings for the well-being of our friends and neighbors. How can a pilgrimage to the cross empower us to live lives of service?
- Christ uses his high priesthood not to glorify himself but to pull back the curtain that separates us from the places deemed only for the "holy." What space, places, and beliefs continue to reinforce separation in our assemblies? What curtains need to be pulled back to invite everyone to embrace their holiness in Christ?
- The equality of God's love for every heart deemed beyond the pale, outside the curtain, was and is provocative. How can our Good Friday observances provoke us to a more and more inclusive vision for our assemblies?
- The opposite of neglecting to gather is not gathering recklessly but rather encouragement. Regardless of our arrangements for safely gathering in these complicated days, how can we center encouragement in our Good Friday and Holy Week observances?

The one who has promised is faithful, on the cross and in resurrection life. Even our most solemn observances are grounded in this hope.