

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Saints Embody the Light Second Week of Easter Wednesday, April 11, 2018 8:15 AM
Acts 5:17-26; **Jn 3:16-21** **St. Stanislaus, bishop and martyr** (The central mystery of the cross is that God has come to save the wicked.)

“God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.”

This is of course **the central mystery of the cross that God has come to save the wicked.** The “world” means the wicked because the world in John’s Gospel are those who don’t care about God. But this gospel is saying that even though the world is full of people who don’t care about God, the situation is not hopeless because **God has come into the world precisely to touch them.**

Now the touch is not actually the touch of light as much as it’s the touch of love. So on the cross Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” This is **love of one’s enemies**, and that type of love **can melt hearts**, and that is of course **the very love that Jesus embodies.** But not only that, Jesus’ love is also meant to be **embodied in his Church, which is why we have the great cult of martyrdom.**

Today we celebrate the memorial of **St. Stanislaus**, actually martyred by his king. Stanislaus was a very good and holy man, but the king was very jealous of his influence and power and his position, his privilege, so to speak, being bishop, and killed him. By living the gospel he proclaimed it in such a way that **the king who hated the gospel because his works were evil wanted to kill him, and did.**

So this sort of drama plays itself out all the time in every age. The light enlightens everyone who comes into the world, unless there’s a choice against the light and they embrace evil. **So the coming of God into the world to save the wicked does not take away freedom in any way. In a way it almost permits freedom for the first time.** You might say if people live without the light, they wouldn’t be free to be good. They wouldn’t be free to embrace the truth. They couldn’t

know the truth without the light. They could not express themselves in beauty without the light. **So the light enables them to embrace what is really true and good and to express themselves in real beauty, a beauty that is the fabric of one's life,** one's actions, one's way of living. And this is **preaching the gospel in action,** and that's what St. Stanislaus did, and therefore **he embodied the light.**

And every saint embodies the light. You may not realize it, but **the saints do attract people;** they attract people who maybe aren't very good because they have taken and lived out the example of the world their whole life. They live a selfish life because, well, they don't know anything else. They live a life of self-indulgence because it never occurred to them that that is not the best life. There's a lot of ignorance in the world, "ignorance" meaning lack of knowledge, lack of wisdom, lack of prudence. **But the light enlightens the mind of everyone who allows it to.** So even if people are basically selfish and so on, they can be drawn to the light, and they are in the lives of saints, even ordinary saints, everyday saints. So God is saving the world in this way.