

Daily Devotion For April 12, 2023

“On a hill far away, stood an old rugged cross, the emblem (symbol) of suffering and shame. And I love that old cross where the dearest and best for a world of lost sinners was slain.” The Old Rugged Cross.

Last Friday, we gathered to commemorate Good Friday. For Palm Sunday, Helen Nakano made crosses made from Palm fronds. Each Sunday we see the cross lit up at the front of our sanctuary.

Christianity has symbols, but there is no other symbol that speaks to our faith than the cross. But what does the cross symbolize to you? In first century Palestine the cross was a hideous symbol of execution. In the first century there were three means of capital punishment. Stoning, beheading, and crucifixion. All three are mentioned in the New Testament, but of all three, crucifixion was the most hideous. It was the symbol of torture and suffering. It was to be a symbol of death and a deterrent to crime. For that reason, it was only administered to the most dangerous of criminals.

Over the years, we have domesticated the cross. It's power to offend and repulse people has been lost. People wear the cross as a piece of jewelry. Can you imagine wearing a hangman's noose or an electric chair as a piece of jewelry? But we do that as the cross.

Thought For Today: What does the cross symbolize to you? Is it the emblem of suffering and shame of Christ to you?

Today's Prayer Focus: Thank God for the cross of Christ and what it symbolizes personally to you. Yesterday as I visited Nancy Nakajima I saw Setsuko Yamanishi's caregiver Vilma there. Vilma told me her father passed away on Monday night and that she was leaving today for the Philippines to be with family. Pray for Vilma's family and for safe travels. Deo Volente.