



*Almighty God, graciously behold this Your family for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and delivered into the hands of sinful men to suffer death upon the cross...*  
(Collect of the Day, Good Friday Chief Service)

Just as the preincarnate Christ was the Father's agent in creation, so was the incarnate Christ His agent in restoring life to a fallen humanity. Human life, body and soul, was and will always be the pinnacle of God's creation. All people matter to Him, from their beginning as a single-cell zygote, into eternity. Thus, when Adam fell and brought sin and death into the world, God announced His plan of rescue: the price for sin must be paid, and He would send His only begotten Son to take on human flesh, bear the sins of all people for all time to the Cross to pay that very price, and rise again to declare sinners right with the Father.

What does that mean for us?

Before the foundation of the world, God preordained every detail of that of which we read during Holy Week, namely that which Jesus did, and that which was done to Him, for us and for our salvation. In our Baptism, we are united with Him in His death and resurrection, and made members of His family, that is to say, His Body. We are free in Christ to appeal to all of this when we are troubled by our sins and beg our heavenly Father for mercy; namely, to spare us from the punishment we deserve (case in point from the DS3 Confession and Absolution: "... I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being."). And we receive the benefits of that which our Lord won for us, when we receive His absolution, hear His Word, and receive His very Body and Blood, wounds and all, for the forgiveness of our sins, life and salvation.

Integral to our having been rescued from sin, death and hell, and having been made members of Christ's Body, God molds us to be like Him. Thus, as all human life matters to Him, all human life matters to us as well, regardless of skin color, ethnicity, stage of life, health or illness, friend or foe. We are all numbered among the sinful men into whose hands Jesus was delivered to suffer death on the cross. As God does not take pleasure in the death of a sinner, neither do we take pleasure in anyone's death, even that of those we might count as our enemies. And we pray for all who are outside the Church, that God would bring them to repentance and to faith in Christ and Him-crucified and into His Church, that they too might receive the benefits won for all on Mount Calvary.

Finally, when our Lord sends His angels to bear us home, we need not fear. With our eyes fixed on His Cross and Resurrection, we can die in the certain hope that He will watch over us while we sleep, and on the Last Day bodily raise us again to behold Him in His glory and to live in eternal bliss in His presence.

Blessed Holy Week and joyous and blessed Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord!