

Third Sunday in Lent - March 7, 2021

It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

LSB 440 – Jesus, Will I Ponder Now

(Verse 1 of this week’s hymn served as inspiration for today’s devotion.)

Before my career in the U.S. military began, I was inspired by many relatives and neighbors in the city which I grew up in; a place called Brockton Massachusetts where you learned to stand on your own two feet. An example of one of the stories of military service I would hear from my relatives and neighbors included a local young man who served in the U.S. Army in South Korea. His name was Gordon M. Craig, a Corporal in the Army’s 16th Recon Company who was just a few months younger than my father who had served in the Navy in the South China Sea.

On September of 1950, Gordon and four other soldiers, while engaged in combat, were ascending a hill in order to disarm a machine gun nest. While climbing that hill, a grenade landed right at their feet. Without a second thought, Gordon threw himself on the grenade, killing himself and saving his fellow soldiers who would succeed in their mission. This selfless act turned the battle of Naktong Bulge into a victory for the U.S. forces. Gordon received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his sacrifice where some 36 years later, another young man from Brockton would serve to walk that very same ground where Gordon gave his life.

As I stood there contemplating in my heart what it took for him to make such a sacrifice so that I could stand in that same place without fear, I couldn’t help but be emotionally overwhelmed by Jesus words and actions for us as He told His disciples “greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends.” Jesus would do this for the life of the world so that none of us need live in fear. Now, by the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to affirm the words of St. Paul that declare “the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Jesus stood for the truth and when it was time, he laid down His life for the life of the world. Only the love of God in Christ could inspire such passion that would send people like Gordon Craig to do the same for others. May we continue to cherish the image of our savior as we make our way to the cross of his passion!

Prayer

Gracious Lord, You give us a vision of love that knows no limits. In pain and suffering, You climbed the hill that led to Your death so that we may know and show Your enduring love in serving the needs of others. Heavenly Father, lead us on our Lenten journey to embrace such love and passion in Jesus’ name, Amen.

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