

Homily **20th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C** (18.8.19)

You know, many of the ancient commentators on the scriptures saw in that incident with Jeremiah a prefigurement of baptism, being lowered into the well of course to die, and it was a muddy deep dark well, but he was pulled out and saved. Just what baptism is about, being immersed and pulled out. And Jesus, of course, was conscious of where His journey was going. There is a baptism, I must still receive and how distressed I am until it's over.

And when we come to Mary, Mary is a powerful symbol of the church. In fact, if you look in the Vatican Council document on 'The Church', you'll find just that - she's put in a little section, a comment at the end in the decree on the church, because she's seen as the first disciple of the first fruits in that race, as the letter to the Hebrews said, in that race in the journey to heaven. And that letter to the Hebrews also reminds us that that race might involve the cross.

And so when we crown Mary today, it reminds us of today's readings. That it's a crown of passion because Mary suffered.

"A sword will pierce your own heart,"

Simeon said to her, and she suffered and she's regarded as an indirect martyr seeing the sacrifice of her son.

But it's also a crown of glory, that maybe the two have to be side-by-side, that we have to pass through the furnace of life, the fire that may attack us. But that crown of martyrdom will turn to a crown of glory. And Mary's crown reminds us that this is our vocation to follow that the first disciple who has gone before us in that race. The first fruits of all who have been redeemed through Christ's passion, death and resurrection, and she is a sign and a beacon of our hope to follow in that glory.