

**Scripture ~ Luke 23:27-31**

*27 A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. 28 But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.’ 30 Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ 31 For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”*

**Reflection for Adults**

As Christians, we are keenly aware of the power of gesture in our communal life. The pouring of water, the breaking of bread, the washing of feet...all of these have deep meaning. But there is a gesture that may get overlooked from time to time. It is the gesture of raising one’s hands in blessing. In more liturgical churches, the priest or minister blesses the congregation with the sign of the cross at the end of worship. Take a look at the picture. The way Jesus’ hand is raised in blessing looks much like the way some ministers bless the congregation.

The fingers used in blessing remind us that God, in the person of Jesus, became a human so that we, through the death of Christ, might share in the divine life of God.

At this ninth station, Jesus encounters the women of Jerusalem, and we hear strange words: “Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore...”. Exactly the opposite of what we hear at the beginning of Luke’s gospel when Gabriel announces to Mary that she will give birth to Jesus: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb”. Perhaps the words in Luke’s account of the Passion are a reminder to us that every moment of our lives, even those places that seem the most forsaken (especially those places), can we be places of God’s blessing.

**Going Deeper**

- How can the pain you have experienced in your own life be a source of blessing for others?

**Reflection for Children**

While Jesus was carrying his cross, he met some women from Jerusalem who were crying. They were very sad because they knew that Jesus was good person and did not deserve to die. Even though he was in incredible pain himself, Jesus stopped to comfort them and bless them.

**Discussion with Children**

- What do you think it means when someone says, “God bless you?”