



For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

— Hebrews 4:15-16

Today is the day, above all else, of passion, the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ—passion as in its original Latin meaning, which is “to suffer.” Suffering is something, not surprisingly, we prefer to avoid, and when we’re being really good, to relieve in others. We usually call that compassion.

Compassion, though, is actually not what we usually take it to be. Its root meaning is also from Latin, the compounding of *passio*, “to suffer,” and *cum*, “with.” So compassion means “to suffer with,” and in its truest sense, compassion is not about relieving the suffering of others. It is about suffering with others, which is a far more challenging thing.

Relieving suffering is well and good. Who could be against that? But it is not what Good Friday is about. And it is not what compassion is about. Suffering *with* is. It is God’s way to reconciliation. It is the way Christ leads, so evident on this day. It is also the way Christ offers us. Jesus said, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Mark 8:34).

Compassion. It is the way of life.

— Stacy Sauls