

**IMPROMPTU HOMILY DURING THE MASS IN TACLOBAN**  
**17 January 2015 | Tacloban Airport**

We have a high priest who is capable of sympathizing with our weaknesses. Jesus is like us. Jesus lived like us and is the same as us in every respect, except sin because he was not a sinner. But to be more like us he assumed our condition and our sin. He made himself into sin. This is what St Paul tells us. And Jesus always goes before us and when we pass an experience, a cross, he passed there before us. And if today we find ourselves here 14 months afterwards, 14 months precisely after the Typhoon Yolanda hit, it is because we have the security of knowing we will not weaken in our faith because Jesus has been here before us.

In his Passion he assumed all our pain. Therefore he is capable of understanding us, as we heard in the first reading.

I'd like to tell you something close to my heart. When I saw from Rome that catastrophe I had to be here. And on those very days I decided to come here. I am here to be with you – a little bit late, but I'm here.

I have come to tell you that Jesus is Lord. And he never lets us down. Father – you might say to me – I was let down because I have lost so many things, my house, my livelihood. It's true if you say that and I respect those sentiments. But Jesus is there, nailed to the cross, and from there he does not let us down. He was consecrated as Lord on that throne and there he experienced all the calamities that we experience. Jesus is Lord. And the Lord from the cross is there for you. In everything the same as us. That is why we have a Lord who cries with us and walks with us in the most difficult moments of life.

So many of you have lost everything. I don't know what to say to you. But the Lord does know what to say to you. Some of you have lost part of your families. All I can do is keep silence and walk with you all with my silent heart. Many of you have asked the Lord – why Lord? And to each of you, to your heart, Christ responds with his heart from the cross. I have no more words for you. Let us look to Christ. He is the Lord. He understands us because he underwent all the trials that we, that you, have experienced.

And beside the cross was his Mother. We are like a little child in the moments when we have so much pain and no longer understand anything. All we can do is grab hold of her hand firmly and say "Mommy" – like a child does when it is afraid. It is perhaps the only words we can say in difficult times – "Mommy".

Let us respect a moment of silence together and look to Christ on the cross. He understands us because he endured everything. Let us look to our Mother and, like a little child, let us hold onto her mantle and with a true heart say – "Mother". In silence, tell your Mother what you feel in your heart. Let us know that we have a Mother, Mary, and a great Brother, Jesus. We are not alone. We also have many brothers who in this moment of catastrophe came to help. And we too, because of this, we feel more like brothers and sisters because we helped each other.

This is what comes from my heart. Forgive me if I have no other words to express myself. Please know that Jesus never lets you down. Know that the tenderness of Mary never lets you down. And holding onto her mantle and with the power that comes from Jesus' love on the cross, let us move forward and walk together as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Thank you very much. (source: rappler.com)