



Usually, Jesus was vividly aware of the presence of his Father. Nevertheless, sometimes he experienced God's absence. This was particularly evident during his passion and death. In Gal 3:13, we are told that he took the curse and the consequences of sin upon himself. St Paul went on to state, in 2 Cor 5:21, 'For our sake God made him to be sin who knew no sin.' His contention that God made Jesus 'to be sin' seems to contradict an assertion in Heb 4:15 that Jesus was sinless. So we must appreciate what Paul was intending to say. Although Jesus was free of any moral fault, he had such a compassionate desire to identify with sinful human beings that he was willing to suffer the effects of sin as if he himself had sinned. As Is 53:12 said: 'He took on his own shoulders the sin of the many.'

One of sin's effects is that it tends to eclipse the sense of God's presence. It is poignant to see how, in Gethsemane, the Father was uncharacteristically silent when Jesus prayed to him. It would seem that when he was dying on Good Friday, Jesus experienced the kind of separation from God that is typical of unrepentant sinners. On the cross, he quoted the first line from Ps 22 when he cried out, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

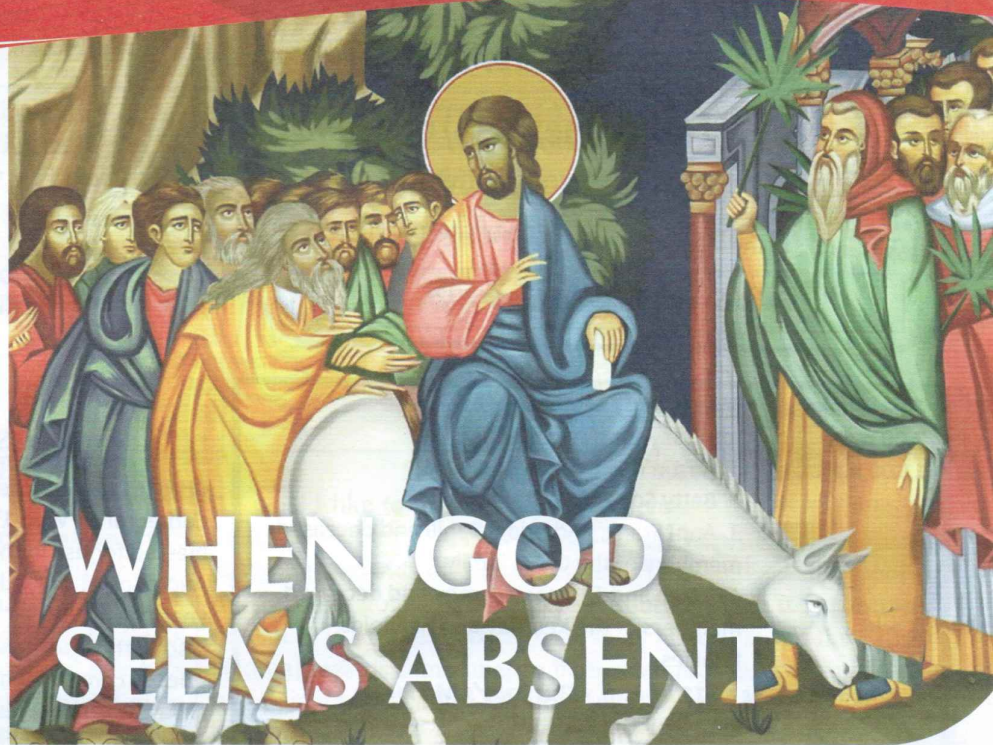
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Showing the Eucharist to the people, the priest says:
Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,**



Writing about that verse, Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa, the papal preacher for many years, made this striking observation in his book *Life in Christ*:

"On the cross Jesus experienced the ultimate consequence of sin, which is the loss of God. He has become the godless one, the atheist. The word atheist can have either an active or a passive connotation. It can indicate someone who refuses God, but also someone who is refused by God. In the second significance, the word applies to Jesus on the cross. His atheism was one of pain, not of guilt. It expiated all the culpable atheism that exists in the world and in each one of us under the

but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon (Mt 26:42)

Father, if this chalice cannot pass without my drinking it, your will be done.

Prayer After Communion

Nourished with these sacred gifts, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, just as through the death of your Son you have brought us to hope for what we believe, so by his Resurrection you may lead us to where you call. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

form of rebellion against God and of indifference to God."

If you feel separated from God because of bereavement, depression, sickness, pain, failure, guilt, hopelessness, desolation of spirit, scandals in the Church, remember that Jesus has shared in your sense of darkness. Although you may have no felt sense of God's presence, God is there anonymously in the darkness with you.

— Pat Collins



Reflection

Jesus promises to stand up for us in heaven – but will you stand up for him here on earth?



Lesson

Go with Peter as he leaves the courtyard and begins to weep bitterly, and share his sorrow for unfaithfulness.



Prayer

Eternal Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son Jesus Christ to us.