

Jesus Forsaken An Experience of Union With God

I. **The Physical/Emotional/Spiritual Suffering (2005-2006)**

- First 1/4 of chemo a good prognosis
- A year later – no change and thought of chemo the rest of my life
- Closing of the parish (St. Francis de Sales)
- October (2005) began a downward spiral, physically reaching its peak in March, 2006, when I went on a full health leave from parish ministry (Sacred Heart)(Called Priest on Personnel Board – Ash Wednesday)
- April showed the tumor still growing and a call for change of chemo. I decided to give it a two month trial and if side effects of appetite loss, fatigue and indigestion were severe, I would quit chemo and just put myself in the hands of God.
- Serious doubts about making the pilgrimage cruise to the Caribbean in later October, 2006 that I was organizing

II. **Jesus Forsaken as the Companion in this Journey**

- Seeing myself with a disability with chemo the rest of my life
- The pain of not being able to meet my expectations
- The expectations of the pastor in my parish ministry
example of promising to take daily Mass while he was on vacation and having to call in each day to say that I couldn't to it
- The thought in the hospital in January, 2006 of letting go of Hispanic Ministry
- Anemia reaching the point of the possibility of needing a blood transfusion "forced my hand" to accept the need for a full health leave
- Watching and hearing my family and friends suffer for their worry about my struggle and a fear of an imminent death
- Seeing my photograph made me 1st reject **Jesus Forsaken**

III. **New Intimacy with God through Embracing Jesus Forsaken**

- Through all these trials of this journey, **peace was constant**
- Example of struggle to reach unity with Judy and the doctor and the Holy Spirit to do God's Will resulting in choosing to forego chemo treatment one week
- In the midst of accepting limits to my parish ministry, I was hearing a call to new ministry
Experience of being prayed over at the hospital (2006) and feeling called to do this ministry in a new setting because I came so alive spiritually
- I experienced great tenderness of the Father's love for me as family members prayed over me, shedding tears and affirming me as an inspirational witness to them