

SEPTEMBER 27 2025 FATHER ROSHAN LOY D'SOUZA

A little boy was frightened during a thunderstorm at night. His mother tucked him into bed and told him gently, “Don’t be afraid, God is always with you.” The boy whispered back, “I know, Mommy... but tonight, can you be with me, I am scared.”

The child’s honesty speaks to all of us. We want a God who isn’t far away, who isn’t just an idea or a spirit in the sky, but a God who is close, who lives with us, who walks with us. And that is exactly what today’s readings tell us: God chooses to dwell among His people — but He does so in a surprising way.

In the first reading Prophet Zechariah sees a vision of Jerusalem, wide and open, without protective walls. That sounds unsafe — but God promises: *“I will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory within her.”*

In other words, the true strength of God’s people is not in walls, armies, or wealth, but in God’s own living presence. This is a lesson for us too. We often build our own “walls” for security — money, status, health, control. But the Lord reminds us: *I am your protection. I am your glory. Trust in me.*

In the Gospel, the crowds are amazed at Jesus’ miracles. They are impressed by His power. But at that very moment, Jesus turns to His disciples and says: *“The Son of Man is going to be delivered into human hands.”*

What a shock! Instead of basking in glory, Jesus speaks of betrayal and suffering. The disciples can't understand.

And we struggle with this too — we prefer a God who fixes problems instantly, not a God who suffers.

But Jesus shows us that God's glory is revealed not in avoiding the Cross, but in embracing it with love. Jesus teaches us that God's glory is not revealed in escaping suffering, but in transforming it with love.

The Cross, which to human eyes seemed like defeat, becomes the very place of victory because Christ accepted it freely out of love for the Father and for us. In embracing the Cross, Jesus shows us that love is stronger than pain, stronger than sin, stronger even than death. We often want to avoid our crosses—our struggles, our wounds, our limitations—but Jesus invites us to carry them with trust, knowing they can become a path to grace. When we unite our hardships with Christ's sacrifice, they are no longer meaningless; they are lifted into the mystery of redemption. Thus, the Cross is not the end, but the doorway to resurrection and the revelation of God's glory.

What This Means for Us:

- When life is heavy — sickness, family struggles, disappointments — God is not far away. He is in the midst of it, a wall of fire around us, the glory shining within us.

- In the Eucharist, this promise becomes real. Here, Christ dwells with us in the most tangible way — His Body and Blood, broken and poured out. He is our God “with skin on” today.
- And we are called to make Him present for others. Sometimes what people need is not explanations but presence: a listening ear, a helping hand, a compassionate heart. That’s how we let God dwell in our world.
- Sometimes we think that in this virtual world—where screens separate us and connections happen through cables and signals—something important is missing. And it’s true: nothing can replace the warmth of a hug or the joy of sitting face-to-face with one another.
- But if we look a little deeper, we discover something very beautiful.
- The real gift is not the technology, not the platform, not even the tools we use. The real gift is *presence*. Your presence. My presence. The fact that, despite the distance, we choose to show up for one another.
- Presence is not measured by how close we sit, but by how open our hearts are. Even through a small screen, we can share encouragement, love, and joy. A word spoken with kindness, a smile that lights up the camera, or even a silent but attentive listening—all these are ways of saying: “*I am here for you.*”

- In a world that often rushes by, true presence is rare and precious. It means we are not distracted, but attentive. We are not just online, but alive to one another. And when that happens, even a virtual gathering becomes holy ground.
- So let us treasure this presence. And when we give the gift of our presence—fully, lovingly, attentively—we create moments that can truly transform hearts. Because in the end, it is presence, not distance, that defines connection.

Conclusion

So, dear brothers and sisters, let us take courage in Zechariah's words: "*Sing and rejoice, for I am coming to dwell in your midst.*" God has already come close in Jesus Christ. He has walked our road, carried our cross, and remains with us always.

May we trust His presence, especially in suffering, and may we also be His presence for one another — God's love with "skin on" in our world today. Amen.