

Daily Homily
Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Feast
24 Ordinary Time, Monday
[14 September 2020](#)

A recent artist has come my way, Madison Cunningham. I really do not know too much about her, and I have not had too much opportunity to research anything about her except one song that seems to be haunting me for the past week or so. It's entitled "When Love Loves Alone." I would guess that she probably does not realize that she is singing about what we celebrate today. It is a song about the cross.

*Sometimes love comes like the morning
Hiding inside of the gloom
Sometimes it falls like an evening
Sometimes love fails when you do*

*Sometimes love grows in the shadows
Where roses, they seldom bloom
Sometimes it withers in sunlight
Sometimes love grows where you do*

...

Sometimes love loves alone

And actually every stanza just goes deeper into some aspect of the cross... at least that is my read.

Forty days ago we celebrated the Feast of the Transfiguration of Jesus. That feast is strategically placed forty days distant from today's feast, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. The Transfiguration was a moment in some of the disciple's lives to help them cope with what was coming, to help them deal with the inevitable, to help them find hope when all would seem lost. The Transfiguration was a taste of God's glory to help them swallow the bitter pill of God's suffering. At the end of that Transfiguration experience, where so much was going on – everything gleaming with a dazzling white, Moses and Elijah appearing as well, a cloud that enfolded them, a heavenly voice that could be heard – it came down to one thing, "Jesus alone with them." It was not just about the overwhelming experience of glory, but it was mostly about what that experience was trying to create within them, to be with Jesus alone. To cling to him more readily, more trustingly, as if everything depended on it. And everything did.

As the cross drew nearer, Jesus knew this aloneness. In the Garden of Gethsemane he felt the pangs of being alone as Apostles slept. Imprisoned he knew the separation from family and friends, and he felt alone in the presence of Pilate and the crowds before him as they chanted, "Crucify him." He carried the cross alone, for the most part until Simon helped for a moment. And on his cross, he hanged alone. Not so much in John's Gospel but in Matthew, Mark, and Luke's Gospels he felt alone from the Father, abandoned even, in his last hours. In a tomb he was placed, and as a rock was rolled in front of it, he was left all alone.

But was he? Was Jesus all alone? The saints throughout the ages would say, "No, he was not alone." The saints who wore the cross, prayed with the cross, carried their own cross, and knelt underneath the cross would say that all along Jesus was accompanied with one companion. He was accompanied with

the companion of love. Saint Padre Pio said, "Beneath the cross one learns to love." And so it is true. The cross of Jesus – which is our cross as well – is the reality that Madison Cunningham sings about, sometimes love does love alone.

We know that in the crosses we carry, especially the crosses we carry for others and because of others, it is never easy. When we see family struggle and we do not have any kind of solution for them. When we feel the pangs of questions that have no definitive answers. When we feel the sting of others who reject, ignore, or grow indifferent to us. When things do not turn out the way we want or the way we planned. All of these things can isolate, make us feel abandoned, wound us even with pains that are beyond the physical. But if we carry the cross right, if we carry the cross with Christ, then the by his wounds we are healed, and we will also carry the cross with his constant companion, which is love.

And this is why the cross is lifted up on top of our churches and in our churches, this is why the cross is exalted today.