

Homily — 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time, C 2019
by Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS

Last Thursday evening, CNN television aired an hour-long dialogue between Anderson Cooper, the host of the evening news program *360⁰*, and Steven Colbert, host of the CBS *late night* show. To my way of thinking, it was a remarkable program. These two men shared intimately about some of the painful realities of their lives. Both Cooper and Colbert, experienced the death of their fathers at about age 10.

Cooper's mother, Gloria Vanderbilt, died this past June.

At one point, Anderson Cooper quoted a part of a letter he had received from Colbert about the death of Cooper's mother. Reading the quote brought Cooper to tears.

The CNN anchor had to pause to collect his thoughts while reading the comedian's comments back to him. Anderson Cooper said "You went on to say,"
What punishments of God are not gifts?
That's a quote from JRR Tolkien.
Cooper said to Colbert, "Do you really believe that?"

After a pregnant pause, Colbert said, "Yes."
His obvious sincerity at that moment nearly took my breath away.
He went on to say "It's a gift to exist . . . and with existence comes suffering."
There's no escaping that.

You don't go looking for the suffering.
But when it comes, if you somehow surrender to it.
you may come to see it as a gift.

Jesus addresses those harsh realities in today's short Gospel story.
He says, "I have come to light a fire on the Earth. ...
Do not think I have come to establish peace on the Earth.
I assure you that quite the contrary is true."

I talk a lot about baptism.
Jesus speaks about it here in a way we're not so familiar with.

In some way, he is insisting that
in this life, there can be no true joy without the cross.

That's what the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews
seems to mean when he refers to Jesus as
"the leader and perfecter of faith."

There is much in our society that wants to avoid, run from,

**"The punishments of God that are truly gifts."
It takes the seeing with the eyes of faith
to come to know that's true in the depth of your being.
That's why we come here together each week.**

God be blessed!