

Hope for the Heart : The Shadow of Three Crosses *Matt.27:42* Luke 23:32-43 *John 19:23-24

Above an archway in front of a church sanctuary, the shadow of three crosses are spotlighted. Luke's pen sheds its own light of stark reality, transporting the scene of silent silhouettes to a place called the Skull, where they crucified him between two criminals. As he hung on the cross, his clothes were claimed by his executioners: four soldiers who divided his garments. His robe, a seamless tunic was valuable; they cast lots for it, as prophesied. They taunted him with sour wine. The spectators' emotions escalated from cold indifference to deep grief. The chief priests sneered & hurled insults, challenging him to come down from the cross for them to believe. Even Pilate took revenge against the Jews, placing a placard asserting : 'King of the Jews' instead of the crime of blasphemy. The two men hanging from crosses on either side vented their rage on him. He was surrounded all around by hatred; but the greatness of his love changed the heart of one. While one thief spit & cursed; the other feared God, admitting the justice of his own fate & defending the innocence of the one beside him. He turned to ask Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom. The answer was immediate, 'I assure you today, you will be with me in Paradise!' In his great agony, there was a glimmer of joy at a sinner's prayer for forgiveness! Jesus endured shame because of the victory & honor awaiting him in the resurrection & beyond! From the shadow of three crosses God clearly reveals we have two choices : belief or unbelief.

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Help for the Home : Ham and Cheese Puffs —serves 8

*2 (10 inch) puff pastry sheets *2 T.butter *2 T.flour *1 cup milk, room temp *salt & pepper
*2 cups cooked ham, diced *2 cups fresh spinach *1-1/2 cup shredded Swiss cheese, divided
*1 egg white, lightly beaten *Preheat oven to 400. Cut puff pastry sheets into 5" squares.
Refrigerate. Melt butter in saucepan; add flour+salt; cook/stir 1 min. Pour warm milk in two batches, whisk, boiling; simmer until it thickens. Add spinach-cook 1 min. Add ham & 1 cup Swiss cheese-stir. Arrange puff pastry squares on parchment lined baking sheet. Top with heaping spoonful of ham & cheese mixture; sprinkle more cheese. Fold corners onto top; forming a smaller square. Brush pastry with egg wash, coat all sides. Bake 20 min until puffed & golden.

Pineapple Ham Fried Rice—serves 4

*2 T.vegetable oil, divided *1 cup rice *1-1/2 c.water *1/4c.pineapple juice *2 cups ham, chopped
*1 cup pineapple tidbits, drained (use juice for cooking rice) *1/3 c.green onions, chopped
*2 T.soy sauce *In saucepan, add 1 T.oil, add rice, toast; stir in water, pineapple juice. Boil reduce heat low, cover. Cook rice until fluffy, 15 min. In large saute pan, 1 T.oil, add ham, brown; add pineapple, green onion & soy sauce, + rice. Stir to coat. Serve immediately.