

Commentary to Palm Sunday - Year C

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion: A Call to Faith



Where had they gone, all those people who greeted the Lord with such exuberance during his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem? Where had they gone, now that He has left the city in a completely different type of triumph, the Triumph of the Cross? There were only a handful of people at the foot of the cross. The people who were there were the people who loved Him more than their own lives. The people who were there were people of faith, faith that God the Father would prevail even as Goodness was crucified. How horrible the other disciples of the Lord must have felt when they realized that they did not have enough faith to stand beneath the cross with Mary, John and those few others.

It is easy for us to thank the Lord when we experience his wonders in our lives. Two young people experience a deeper love than ever before and marry, and thank God. A child is born and brought to be baptized, and they thank God for this life. People experience the young, their young, taking their place in the world and thank God for guiding them.

But life also has challenges and crises. Life often calls us to Calvary, calls us to have faith in the Triumph of the Cross. We have many very sick people in our parish from children up to senior citizens. Family and friends pray for their loved ones uniting their pain to the pain of the cross. They are called to have faith that just as the Father transformed grief into joy and death into life, so also, God will bring joy despite the present suffering.

The cross of the Lord is a call to faith. When crises hit our lives, our faith is challenged. It takes tremendous courage and tremendous faith to hold on to Jesus when we are called to stand with Him on Calvary, when we are called to unite our pain and suffering to His. Michelle Tumes wrote:

You've got to hold on to Jesus

When your heart is crying, your world is dying

You've got to hold on to Jesus

When we consider the challenges that life throws at us, we realize that it is more important for us to be with the Lord on Calvary than with the crowd during the entry into Jerusalem. During this Holy Week, we ask God for faith, faith to hold on to him when we would rather run and hide, faith to hold on to him when faith itself becomes difficult and demanding.

We enter Holy Week now not just reflecting on events of the past, but uniting our present to His eternal presence.

Message: Jesus' suffering is a living reality, but not the last word. The blessed palm represents our goal.

Welcome to Holy Week! We just listened to St. Luke's account of Jesus' suffering, death and burial. These events not only happened 2000 years ago - they continue today. Earlier this month gunmen entered a home care centre in Yemen. They handcuffed security guards, nurses and volunteers. Then one by one they murdered 16 people including four religious sisters - members of Blessed Mother Teresa's order.

Their bishop Paul Hinder said the nuns "died as martyrs because they witnessed Christ and shared the lot of Jesus on the cross." I will say more about these noble Sisters on Holy Thursday and Good Friday. Their deaths show dramatically that Jesus' suffering and death continue in the lives of Christians today.

The prayer says, "Teach me to be generous...to give and not count the cost." You can find the Prayer for Generosity in the bulletin. Consider saying it during Holy Week - and beyond.

I give the last word to Bishop Minder, "As Christians we believe that Golgotha is not the end, but the Risen Lord will have the final word at the Last Judgment." Yes, Jesus' suffering is a living reality, but not the last word. Take home a blessed palm. It represents victory. That's our goal. "The Risen Lord will have the final word." Amen.

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