

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion C/2007

Today we are celebrating the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem and his passion. The glory that Jesus was surrounded with as he entered Jerusalem was a real triumph and honor, but it was a contrasted success. What came at the end of that emotional day was passion, suffering and death. The same crowds that were chanting in his honor, - "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord", - were among those who were shouting at the end of day: "Crucify him".

This scene of adulation, and then of rejection, of Jesus teaches that the true glory is not that comes from human beings, but from God. Praise and admiration that people give us are often short-lived and transient. For Jesus, his true glory will come from his resurrection, because there the Father will place him above every creature and recognize him as God and the Lord of the whole universe.

The way that leads to true glory is the unconditional love that gives everything until the giving up of one's own life for the sake of the beloved ones. That is what Jesus has done. He emptied himself and gave up the legitimate privilege of being equal to God by becoming a human being and by accepting death on the cross.

When a life has been completely lived for the sake of our beloved ones as Jesus did, the suffering that comes from self-emptiness becomes a healing suffering. At the heart of Jesus' suffering, there is a kernel of love, a love that forgives, restores and re-creates. Jesus' passion is a passion of love for the salvation of humankind. So has he not turned back his cheeks to those who plucked his beard; so has he not hidden his face from buffets and spitting. Love alone is able to endure sacrifices and sufferings for the beloved ones, because in it each one is loved not for any interest, but for what he truly is, that is, God's child.

We live in a harsh world where torture, physical abuse, violence of every kind, assassinations and war make the front page of our newspapers. We run the risk of becoming used to them to the point of being insensitive to suffering, pain and death of human beings. To listen to the passion of Jesus is to listen to the cry of the innocent who unjustly suffer in our world today. It is also an invitation to stir in us the conscience of solidarity in order to break and stop the chains of violence.

We should not forget that any time we make people suffer in one way or another, we prolong Christ's passion. Christ's passion challenges each one of us. The suffering Christ teaches us to forgive as he did on the cross, especially where we have been unjustly hurt. He compels us to open our heart to the gift of forgiveness by giving and receiving forgiveness from one another. May you find consolation and comfort in the passion of Jesus when love of your beloved ones brings you sacrifice and sufferings! May God bless you all!

Isaiah 50, 4-7; Philipians 2, 6-11; Luke 22, 14-23, 1-56



Homily Date: April 1, 2007

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Document Name: 20070401homily.pdf