

Homily for Palm Sunday of the Lord's passion Year C 10-04-2022 by Fr. Lubem Waya, osj.

First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalm: Psalm 22

Second Reading: Philippians 2:6-11

Gospel: Luke 22:14-23:56

WILL YOU FOLLOW HIM TO THE END?

Today we begin the Holy Week by commemorating the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem. He enters Jerusalem with pomp and style to the great admiration and jubilation of the people with raised palm fronds and exultant praise who welcome Him shouting *Hosannah in the highest to the blessed one who comes in the name of the Lord!* Yet, He is only coming to Jerusalem to embrace His fate and face cruelty, passion and death on the cross for our salvation. A direct fulfilment of the messianic prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, according to which Christ enters Jerusalem on a colt in meekness and humility, offering us victory and peace that would be secured only through defeat by death on the cross and resurrection. Hence, since creation this remains the most solemn and sacred week in the history of the Church and the world. But the question is how can we repay the Lord for this great act of love and sacrifice for us? Let us follow faithfully in His footsteps.

The first reading from Deutero-Isaiah references in the songs about the Suffering Servant of the Lord, that though innocent he was, he would face insult and humiliation but offer no resistance. He, as Christ, bears all, patiently and willingly for our sake, knowing fully well that though it would lead to death, the Lord shall come to His help and He would not be put to shame but He shall triumph in the end. As such, with His death and resurrection, Eternal death has been defeated by the death on the Cross. The fruit of disobedience has been destroyed by the fruit of obedience. Pride has been defeated by humility and hate forever has been defeated by love, thus teaching us that we can only overcome evil with good. But are we ready to learn from Him?

When we surrender to God, He takes control of our lives even in those moments we do not understand. This truth is captured in the whole sequence of the events of Christ's passion from the agony in the garden up to His death on the Cross, that Jesus is always fully in control but chooses not to prove it. He finally brings everything to fulfilment when He willingly yields His life into the Father's hands in total obedience, thus completing the Father's will to reconcile fallen humanity back to Himself. He does this as He forgives all who betrayed Him including you and I, welcoming also the good thief into paradise. Truly His mission is that of reconciliation and not that of retaliation. You too, let go of the hurt and bitterness in your heart and you shall have peace.

Often times we feel that might is right when provoked, and that evil can be overcome by a corresponding show of power. But Christ teaches us otherwise with the cross, that humility is not powerlessness and forgiveness is not weakness. Rather, these are virtues only for the strong. Are you weak or strong? This lesson is also reiterated in the Christological hymn in the second reading from Ephesians, summarising the entire life of Christ. His origin was divine, yet He humbled Himself becoming one of us in human form. And in His humility, He willingly accepted to suffer humiliation, crucifixion and death on the cross in the hands of His creatures. Nevertheless, because of His faithful obedience to God, He was not abandoned to death but He rose to exaltation by God, receiving the name above every other name. As the first born from the dead He holds the assurance of our faith. May He help us too to obey God faithfully to the very last. Amen.