

From the PASTOR'S DESK



Holy Week

In today's passage from St. Matthew's Gospel, the crowds come out to welcome Jesus, greeting Him as the Son of David. They give Him the Messianic title and treat Him as royal. As we know, it was probably some of the same members of this enthusiastic crowd, who a few days later, shouted for His torture and death.

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was filled with joy, even the children were swept up in it. It looks like a parody of a Roman triumphal procession. Jesus did not come on a warhorse though; He came on a donkey. There were no majestic trappings, nor victory banners. He was greeted with waving palm branches and dusty garments. As Holy Week progresses, we see more and more contrast between the imperial rituals of Caesar, the Lord of the World, and Jesus, the Incarnate Word, who made the world. He will be dressed in mock royal purple and crowned with thorns. His hand will hold a reed as a fake scepter.

At Caesar's accession, his soldiers raised him on a war shield to be acclaimed. Pilate mockingly presents Jesus to the cursing crowd to be acclaimed and hoists Him onto the cross to be enthroned. Instead of admiring courtiers, a group of clerics, ruffians, and disappointed idealists shout insults from the foot of the cross.

Holy Week is an exercise in drama, like a pantomime. The true prince, whom nobody can really see, is present all the time, and His true identity is revealed in the last scene.

Earthly powers attempt to emphasize their might and dignity by inflicting ridicule and humiliation on those who oppose them. The joke is on them. In this divine plot, pretensions to supremacy are held up as vain and empty. Christ, the Lord of Glory, in His humility, questions the foundations on which all earthly power rests.

At the end of St. Matthew's crucifixion scene, the Centurion and those who were with him say, truly, this man was the son of God. The representative of Caesar, standing before the throne of the cross, proclaims the true king whose identity is now clear for all to see. The Centurion acknowledges that there is another king beside Caesar. A king who holds out His arms and says, I am gentle and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Fr. Hernan Cely

Pastor

