

Palm Sunday in the Passion of Our Lord

Cycle A - 4.9.17

Isaiah 50:4-7/Philippians 2:6-11/

Matthew 26:14-27:66

*Hi everybody,
Still in Southern California with my Mom but will return to Lafayette tomorrow as class will resume online on Tuesday and I suspect I will need tutoring to try and learn American Sign Language using ZOOM. Enjoy a blessed Holy Week as best you can and stay safe and well and loving... Fr. Paul*

YOUR ROLE IN GOD'S PLAN... YOUR PLACE IN GOD'S HEART

During World War II the story is told of a group of coal miners who went to Winston Churchill asking for permission to leave the mines and join the army to fight. They felt they weren't really able to contribute to the war effort where they were. The next day Churchill addressed 4,000 miners in Royal Hall. He told them:



"Gentlemen, they say Hitler is coming. They say he has 100,000 on the sea, 100,000 on the land, and 100,000 in the air. But I say to you that one day we are going to be victorious over this matter and one day we will walk down the streets of London in victory and I will say to a young soldier, 'Where were you in Britain's finest hour?' And he will answer, 'I was in the trench with my rifle fulfilling my responsibility, doing my part for my country.' And, I will say to a wife and mother, 'Where were you in Britain's finest hour?' She will say, 'I was in a hospital

caring for the wounded, tending to my children and fulfilling my responsibility, doing my part for my country.' And I will ask some of you where you were in Britain's finest hour and you will say, 'I was down in the pit of the mine with my face against the face of the coal, fulfilling my responsibility, doing my part for my country'."

The traditional Jewish Passover meal begins with the youngest person present asking: "How is this night different from every other night?"



If we were to ask ourselves how this coming week we call "holy" will be different from every other week it is perhaps an easy question this year since this Lent has been different from every other Lent for all of us and Holy Week and Easter will be different for all of us.

We each have an individual role to play in God's plan. Our challenge is to discover our role and remain faithful to it, the very same challenge Jesus faced. We all have a role to play in countering the spread of COVID-19 in our world today. Some people like medical professionals, law enforcement officers, fire fighters, grocery store employees, sanitation workers and others in "essential" businesses have very visible roles. The role for others of us is to simply stay at home and by doing so slow the spread of the virus. We all have to see our roles as important and take our roles seriously. Perhaps this Holy Week will uniquely challenge many of us to rethink

our importance and base our worth not on what we can do or earn, but on who we are and how loving and supportive we can be of one another in this very anxious and uncertain time.

Our second reading says that though Jesus was fully God, he emptied himself and truly became one of us; he humbled himself and became obedient even unto death, even an excruciating death on a cross.

It was amazing that Jesus set aside all his divine prerogatives as God to become a helpless human infant, weak and subject to cold and hunger and thirst and disease. Yet it is just as amazing that when he had emptied himself and became fully human, he was not quickly filled up with some kind of sin or ugliness. Jesus, through whom and by whom everything in the universe was created and made, remained humble and obedient to God.



He borrowed someone's donkey, not a majestic stallion, for his grand entrance into Jerusalem. Jesus, who set the stars in their orbits and ordered the very elements, needed help from Simon of Cyrene to complete his mission and reach Calvary. Jesus, who could have commanded legions of angels to come to his aid, went meekly to his death like a lamb to slaughter. He went not in weakness, but in love.

Jesus did not rebel. He did not turn back. He did not succumb to temptation. He set his face like flint and embraced humiliation and beating for us for by his wounds we are healed. He embraced death

in order to take our rightful place on the cross. He died not in bitterness but in forgiveness for his executioners and for us. He cried out to God as he died. And his death was not the end of the story because he was so strongly connected both to God and to us. Death could not sever the cords which bound him to God and to us! In his life, death and resurrection we clearly see that love is stronger than death!

Our challenge, as disciples of Jesus, is to make, in our lives, connections of love which are stronger than death. Are we willing to empty ourselves and allow God to fill us? Can we shed our possessions, our resentments and selfishness? Can we truly embrace our crosses? Can we humble ourselves and borrow what we need and ask for the help we need in order to carry our crosses so we, too, may reach our Calvary? Can we stop fixating on news reports and the daily tallies of deaths and confirmed cases and look more at Jesus, fix our attention on Christ crucified and the love for us that his death reveals? Can we stay at home except for necessary trips to the grocery store or medical appointments? Can we stay six feet apart from one another? Can we wear masks when we are in contact with others? Can we express our gratitude to those who put themselves at risk in heightened ways by serving others in this pandemic? Can we gently show displeasure and disfavor towards those who ignore the needed social distancing during this crisis? Are we willing to die to ourselves? Are we ready to die with Christ so that we might rise with Christ?



HOLY WEEK

St. Francis de Sales called Calvary the “academy of love.” With God’s grace may we live our baptismal promises, dying and rising with Christ Jesus so we might truly learn how to love, learn how to live in love and even learn how to die to ourselves in love, especially during this pandemic. That is, after all why Jesus became a human being, why he was willing to die and why he rose from the dead – so we might become one in love with God. May God be blessed.



Paul Dechant, OSFS