

Homily Notes for Palm Sunday, April 10, 2022, 6th Lent C

Readings: Luke 19:28-40, Isa. 50:4-7, Ps. 22, Phil 2:-11, Luke 23:1-49

Theme: Stay close to Jesus, like Simon of Cyrene

1. Introduction: Why did Jesus, the Son of God, have to die in such a horrible, painful, humiliating way? Because of the seriousness of sin. We are at Palm/Passion Sunday, when Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem as the Lamb of God, to die for our sins. This morning I want to be clear about the seriousness of sin and of the gracious promise of God for our salvation if we repent and believe.

2. The first reading is one of the four Songs of the Suffering Servant, found in Isaiah. If we are to imitate Jesus, we must be ready to suffer, to be mistreated. Are we not confirmed to be soldiers of Christ?

3. This Psalm is famous for what Jesus cried out on the cross. “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”

4. In the second reading, St Paul highlights how Jesus humbled himself and was persecuted and killed for our sake. But for His obedience he was exalted above every other name and given power over all the earth.

5. The Gospel reading summarizes Jesus’s last day and how he suffered so much for us.

6. Why did this have to happen? Because sin is so serious and costs so much. Therefore, because it is so necessary for us to understand this, I want to be sure that you all know what St. Paul says in Romans, Chapter 1, about the seriousness of sin and how, if we do not confess and repent, coming close to and staying right with Jesus, it can condemn us to Hell! Let us look at the passage, Rom 1:16-32.

7. What is the point? This is a very serious warning about the destructive nature of sin. St. Paul says, “Although they know the just decree of God that all who practice such things deserve death, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. How do we know that “deserve death” means eternal judgment? See the parallel passage in 1 Cor 6:9; “Do you not know that the unjust will not inherit the kingdom of God?...None of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. That is what some of you used to be; but now you have had yourselves washed (baptized), you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. Now let us go back and see how this develops in Romans 1.

8. He begins, “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel. It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.” But it was the preaching of that Gospel that caused him to be persecuted, assaulted and finally killed.

9. He continues, v. 18,

“For the wrath of God is indeed being revealed from heaven against every impiety and wickedness of those who suppress the truth by their wickedness. For what can be known about God is evident to them, because God made it evident to them. Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made. As a result, they have no excuse; for although they knew God they did not accord him glory as God or give him thanks.”

10. What is the consequence of this?

“Instead, they became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless minds were darkened. While claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for the likeness of an image of mortal man or of birds or of four legged animals or of snakes.”

Hence, idolatry made them senseless. Can we not see this in the foolishness of those who promote gender confusion? Some believe and teach others, even children, that even though they are male and female, just by thinking and imagining, they can be the opposite sex? How stupid. This cannot occur. And it leads to men claiming to be women and competing in sporting events against women. We have a woman approved to the Supreme Court of the United States who will not say what defines a woman.

11. Hence, the situation gets worse.

“Therefore, God handed them over to impurity through the lusts of their hearts for the mutual degradation of their bodies. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and revered and worshiped the creature rather than the creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

“Therefore, God handed them over to degrading passions. Their females exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the males likewise gave up natural relations with females and burned with lust for one another. Males did shameful things with males and thus received in their own persons the due penalty for their perversity.”

“And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God handed them over to their undiscerning mind to do what is improper. They are filled with every form of wickedness, evil, greed, and malice; full of envy, murder, rivalry, treachery and spite. They are gossips and scandalmongers and they hate God. They are insolent, haughty, boastful, ingenious in their wickedness, and rebellious toward their parents. They are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know the just decree of God that all who practice such things deserve death, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”

12. This describes the journey into evil and into hell of those who rebel against God. There are consequences in this life for such behavior as well as the loss of heaven, being condemned to hell for eternity! Is this not what is being promoted in our country, especially through our schools and universities?

13. I am concerned for all of you and especially our children because many forces in our society are promoting exactly what St. Paul says that God condemns. Today I want us to be clear on the danger of sexual perversions. Homosexuality, “gay-marriage”, and all the variations on gender confusion, loss of innocence, loss of modesty, loss of family with children. Most recently we can see clearly the danger of the Disney productions. They have embraced presenting, even to the youngest of children, models of immorality and gender confusion. They are even instructing their hosts at Disneyland not to make introductions like “ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls”. Parents, you must instruct your children from a very young in these things. A recent report claimed that as much as 30% of certain youth identify with the LGBT identity. There are terrible consequences personally as well as socially, as well as eternally!

14. In addition to being immoral, this leads to the decline and destruction of one’s country. South Korea just reported a fertility rate of 1.0 children per woman per lifetime. This is a disaster for a country and its culture.

15. This is why Jesus had to suffer and die such a horrible death to pay for the sins of all the people. I used to think that we had become wiser, and the Bible was describing things long past. Not I must admit that God in his Word was describing our time also.

16. But let us not forget that God offers blessings to those who repent and believe. Later in Romans he says of the faithful, “We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose... If God is for us, who can be against us?... What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? Concerning our bodies, he says in 1 Cor 6:19 that the bodies of the baptized are “temples of the Holy Spirit” which we have from God, and that we are not our own. We Christians understand that we, our bodies, and all we have, belongs to God!

How beautiful the opportunity to get back close to God through the sacrament of penance! God is waiting for us.

The two questions:

1. What is the one thing from this Mass to make me the better-version-of-myself that God wants?
2. What should I offer of my life, up to God, at the time of offering?