

Palm Sunday 2009

Today we are in the middle of a **paradox**.

On the one hand, we are filled with **joy**.

- ✍ As Jesus enters Jerusalem, **throng**s of people rejoice.
- ✍ The promised Savior has finally come! The Messiah is here! Redemption is at hand!

But then, on the **other** hand, we turn towards the **sorrowful narrative** of our Lord's rejection, suffering, and death - with his **passion**.

- ✍ **Palm** Sunday is also **Passion** Sunday.
- ✍ It is a solemn, silent moment.

How can a day of **triumph** be filled with both joy **and** sorrow? Because what **seems** to be Christ's **defeat** is actually his **victory**, the victory of **everlasting love**.

- ✍ "A man can have no greater love than **to lay down his life** for his friends" (John 15:13).
- ✍ That's what Jesus **taught**, and that's what he **did** in his passion, to prove **beyond the shadow of a doubt** that his love for us has **no limits**.
- ✍ The angels sang "Glory to God in the Highest" when Jesus was born in **Bethlehem**, and now the people sing, "Hosanna in the Highest" as Jesus enters **Jerusalem**.

Both entrances were motivated by God's love, the **same love** that led him to be **obedient** to the Father even to the point of **death**,

- ✍ to **reverse** the disobedience of Adam,
- ✍ **to pay** the price of our sins,
- ✍ and to **rescue** fallen mankind from hopelessness and injustice.

We solve our paradox.

- ✍ The source of our **sorrow** is **sin**, our sins, the **cause** of Christ's suffering.
- ✍ But the source of our **joy** is Christ's **love**, the very reason Jesus was **willing** to suffer, and the very **power** that, through his sacrifice on the cross, **conquers** our sins.

As Christians we **always** live inside the **paradox** of Palm Sunday, can always find **joy**, the **joy of Christ's limitless love**, even amidst the **profoundest** sorrows.

Today is the beginning of the **holiest week** of the year, the week we call **Holy Week**.

- ✍ During the **first** Holy Week, two thousand years ago, Jesus won the **victory** over sin and evil.

✍ During **this** Holy Week, he wants to **extend** that victory into **our lives**, into the parts of our lives that still **need** it, that still haven't learned how to live the paradox of Palm Sunday.

He wants to come into our hearts this Holy Week in the same way he came into Jerusalem

- ✍ **humbly and peacefully**, riding on a donkey colt,
- ✍ surrounded by the crowd who acclaimed him as the “Son of David – Hosanna!”
- ✍ but then quickly turned and yelled, “crucify him!”

Perhaps today, as we hear the passion proclaimed, we might ask ourselves with whom we identify in the reading...

- ✍ Do you identify with the crowd? Do you just “go along” with everyone else? Then decide today that you will follow through with your “hosanna’s” and commit your life **fully** to Christ.
- ✍ Do you identify with Simon of Cyrene? Then take up YOUR cross, and follow Jesus.
- ✍ Do you identify with the “good thief” hanging beside Jesus? Then you know that Jesus is dying for YOUR sins – cease to sin and worship Him who hangs beside you.
- ✍ Do you identify with Joseph of Arimathea, who went and asked for the body of Jesus? Then go to Jesus in your prayers and ask reparation for all the sins and sacrileges committed against our Savior.

Regardless of with whom you identify today, **GO TO THE CROSS – JOURNEY WITH JESUS** on His Way of the Cross. This has been our theme this lent – the Stations of the Cross – walking with Christ – carrying our own crosses. Now is the time – this is the week to really journey with Him as we celebrate these great liturgies of the Sacred Triduum: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday.

While the Stations end in the tomb – with everyone going away – we know that in three days, He will rise again. Filled with faith in His resurrection, let us follow Him this week on the Way of the Cross – and journey with Him – carrying our own crosses – and knowing that they will lead US to the joy of eternal life with Christ in Paradise.