

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

March 25, 2018

St. Augustine Cathedral

11:30 a.m.

...And so we begin! This holiest of all the weeks of our Liturgical Year invites us all to walk with Jesus during these final days of His earthly ministry, following Him all along the way to the completion of His great Act of Redeeming the Human Race.

We go from this glorious and triumphant entrance into the City of Jerusalem, as people waved palm branches, made a kind of "red carpet" for Jesus to travel by laying down in front of Him their own cloaks, hailing Him with their joyful shouts of "Hosanna to the Son of David", all the way through Jesus' Last Supper, followed by His betrayal, arrest and shouts of condemnation by those same people who are now yelling: "Crucify Him" on Holy Thursday.

We walk with Jesus along the long ordeal of His Way of the Cross, and are reminded once again of the tortuous, vicious and inhumane treatment He received all along the way.

We stand with Jesus on Calvary and re-live His crucifixion and final passion, and finally, His death; and we watch once again as Jesus' lifeless Body is buried in a "borrowed" Tomb with a Stone rolled to close Him in that Tomb, as much of the world thought was the end of His life.

Today's Reading of the Gospel is unique, not only in the fact that it is very long, but that we all are asked to participate in its' proclamation. As I do, I imagine that on a day like this, you too may find that you almost can't help but identify with the various people who were a part of the Passion narrative.

Maybe it was with the crowds who, when Jesus entered into the City on this day called Palm Sunday, shouted "Hosanna!!!" Hooray for Jesus. We love you, Jesus!

Perhaps, we would all be ashamed to admit, it might be in relating to Judas' act of betrayal, or Peter's act of denial.

Perhaps we can relate with Simon of Cyrene who, though forced to help, ended up realizing what a great privilege he had been given.

Maybe it is with the non-believing Centurion who, at the end, made one of the most powerful Acts of Faith ever recorded: "Surely this was the Son of God".

Finally, it could be that we relate well with Joseph of Arimathea, who so courageously admitted to being a Disciple of Jesus no matter what negative impact that would have on his political career, and offered to have Jesus be buried in his own tomb.

We all need to realize that we do not find ourselves relating to only one of those “characters”; actually, we are in all of them. Sometimes our faith is strong and vibrant, when we might be shouting “Hosanna”...We love you Jesus! Sometimes we are embarrassed by how faith-less we can be, when we deny our faith in Jesus, or betray His trust by the choices we make.

Sometimes we do well as followers of Jesus; sometimes we don't.

What is most important is that we don't ever give up; what is most important is that we keep walking with Jesus all along the way of our own journey of faith, both at the good times and high points of our Faith Journey, as well as even during the bad times, when we are at the low points of where sin gets the better of us.

In today's Second Reading from St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians, we heard him say that Jesus, though He was the Son of God, didn't hold onto that Title, but willingly “emptied Himself;...He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Jesus did whatever it took to completely align His will with the will of His Heavenly Father, even if it took His own awful and painful death for that to happen.

That's what we need to do as well. We pray that this Lent, and this very Holy Week, will help us to continue imitating Jesus in that very basic regard---to align our wills with that of God's, and to do whatever it takes to remain faithful to God's Will, even when it might require of us suffering, or even death.

May the blessed palm we take home with us today to place in prominent places in our homes, especially near our family Crucifix, remind us of our own fickleness; but may it also remind us of Jesus' faithfulness and His desire to bring us His forgiveness. Please try to make this week truly holy----special----a time to remember all that is important about who we are as People of Faith and followers of Jesus.

May we follow Jesus today, throughout this Holy Week, and right into the Joy of Easter next Sunday, and all the days of our lives, because as St. Paul reminded us: “Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”. Amen!

God bless you, now and always!