

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION B/2006

The entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, with the presence of the crowd chanting and singing in his honor is a triumph, but a modest and contrasted success. What came at the end of that passionate and emotional day was passion, suffering and death. The crowds that were praising him to the point of willing to make him a king, are among the same of those who were shouting: "Crucify him". We see how praise and admiration people give us are short-lived; the true glory comes from God and not from human beings. The true glory of Jesus lies in his resurrection from the dead, because there the Father will place him above every other creature and recognize him as God and the Lord of the whole universe.

The way that leads to true glory is the unconditional love that gives everything until the giving up of one's own life for the beloved ones, the self-denial and emptiness that do not hold on to legitimate privilege in order to be equal to everybody and to keep everyone at our side for God's glory, the submission to the Father that makes us appreciate his fatherhood of us and helps us surrender to his love, and the obedience to his will that makes life depending on his grace and mercy.

When a life has been lived under God's guidance for the sake of our beloved ones, then the suffering that comes from self-surrender and self-emptiness becomes a healing suffering. At the heart of Jesus' suffering, there is a kernel of love, a love that forgives, restores and re-creates. Jesus' passion is a passion of love for the salvation of humankind. So has he not turned back his cheeks to those who plucked his beard; so has he not hidden his face from buffets and spitting. Love alone is able to endure sacrifices and sufferings for the beloved ones, because in it each one is loved not for any interest, but for what he truly is, that is, God's child. As sacred Scripture says: "The greatest love a person can have for his friends is to give his life for them". My friends, we live in a harsh and violent world where torture, physical abuse, violence of every kind, assassinations and war have become our daily lot and make the front page of our newspapers. We run the risk of becoming used to them to the point of being insensitive to suffering, pain and death of human beings. To listen to the passion of Jesus is to listen to the cry of the innocent who unjustly suffer in our world today. It is also an invitation to stir in us the conscience of solidarity in order to break and stop the chains of violence.

Do we want to suffer with love and without hatred, or do we to make others suffer unjustly from our own hands? We should not forget that any time we make people suffer in one way or another we prolong Christ's passion. Christ's passion is a questioning to each one of us? Let me finish by saying this: The suffering Christ teaches us to forgive as he did on the cross, especially where we have been unjustly hurt. He compels us to open our heart to the gift of forgiveness by giving and receiving forgiveness from one another. May you find consolation and comfort in the passion of Jesus when love of your beloved ones brings you sacrifice and sufferings! May God bless you all!



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