

Palm Sunday B/2015

The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, with the presence of the crowd chanting and singing in his honor, was certainly a triumph for Jesus and the spectators who lived the scene. But that triumph was fragile, because what came by the end of that emotional day was passion, suffering and death.

The crowds of those who were praising Jesus and adulating him to the point of willing to make him a king, were among those who wanted him to be put to death. As human experience has shown us, human praise and adulation is fragile and short-lived. God alone can give us the glory that will last forever and which nobody can take away from us. It is that glory that God will give Jesus by raising him from the dead.

The way that leads to that glory is the cross, passion and death. The cross and the Passion mean self-denial, emptiness and submission to the will of the Father. That is what St Paul says in the hymn to the Philippians, namely that Jesus who was equal to the Father emptied himself and did not cling to his privilege, but became a man like us. He submitted himself to the Father in total obedience until death on the cross.

The reason why Jesus did so was because he loved us. He loved us so much to the point of counting his own life as nothing. As St John says, there is no greater love than to give one's life for one's friends. That is why the suffering of Jesus is a healing suffering. It is a suffering born out of love; a love that forgives, restores and re-creates. Jesus' Passion is a Passion of love for the salvation of the world.

Because of that love, as the prophet Isaiah says, Jesus did not hesitate to give his back to those who beat him and his cheeks to those who plucked his beard. He did not hide 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.

The suffering Christ teaches us to forgive as he did on the cross, especially when we have been unjustly hurt. Jesus compels us to open our heart to the gift of forgiveness by giving and receiving forgiveness from one another.

The Passion of Jesus challenges us to love as he did by giving our lives as he did. To listen to the passion of Jesus is to listen to the cry of the innocent who unjustly suffer in our world today. The Passion of Jesus invites us to live in solidarity with the world so that we come to stop the chains of violence. May God help us through the celebration of the Passion of our Lord to be the peace makers! God bless you all!

Isaiah 50: 4-7; Philippians 2: 6-11; Mark 14: 1-15: 47



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