

Palm Sunday

The Church celebrates this Sixth Sunday in Lent as both Palm Sunday and Passion Sunday. It is on Palm Sunday that we enter Holy Week, welcoming Jesus into our lives and asking Him to allow us a share in His suffering, death and Resurrection. This is the time of the year when we stop to remember and relive the events which brought about our redemption and salvation.

The Holy Week liturgies present us with the actual events of the dying and rising of Jesus. These liturgies enable us to experience in our lives here and now what Jesus went through then. In other words, what we commemorate and relive during this week is not just Jesus' dying and rising, but our own lifetime of dying and rising in Him, which result in our healing, reconciliation, and redemption.

Today we heard two things. One group of people praised Jesus singing Hosanna. The other group of people said "kill him." Jesus is walking in the middle of the crowd. As we sang in the responsorial psalm, Jesus cries out, "My God, My God why have you abandoned me?"

He knew that God never abandons anyone. When we are as humans, we have the same situation of denial of suffering. This is the lesson that we learn from him. He emptied himself and become slave of all.

Crucifixion was chosen by the Romans with some thoughts in the background. It was designed as capital punishment, to put a criminal to death, but it aimed to do a couple of other things as well. It was designed to inflict optimal physical pain. The procedure was for a period of hours where dragging the pain of the body and bringing it into an unconscious state, then it is ease to be crucified. The second intention was to humiliate the person. That's why he was stripped naked. Crucifixion clearly had humiliation in mind.

One of the contemporary theologian wrote, "the humiliation Jesus underwent had not been digested by the disciples. That's why they scattered and hid themselves.

We undergo the same humiliation in our life when we are exposed.

I read this somewhere and thought it was relevant to share. The Holy cross members had gathered to prepare itself for the Beatification of its founder. Reflecting upon the spirituality of their founder, one Holy Cross member offered this challenge to his community: if you live inside of any family for any length of time, at some point that family will injure you and wound you deeply. But, and this is the point, how you handle that wound, with either bitterness or forgiveness, will color the rest of your life!

Jesus stretched out his heart with deep empathy, graciousness and forgiveness.

Let us journey with this humiliation to get the grace and glory.