

PALM SUNDAY – YEAR C

(Is 50: 4-7; Ph 2: 6-11; Lk 22: 14 - 23, 56)

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Brothers and sisters,

Jesus shows us how to face moments of difficulty
and the most devious of temptations
by preserving in our hearts a peace that is neither detachment
nor superhuman impassivity,
but confident abandonment to the Father and to his saving will,
which bestows life and mercy.

He shows us this kind of abandonment by rejecting,
at every point in his earthly ministry,
the temptation to do things his way
and not in complete obedience to the Father.

By his entrance into Jerusalem,
he shows us the way.

For in that event, the evil one,
the prince of this world, had a card up his sleeve:
the card of *triumphalism*.

Yet the Lord responded by holding fast to his own way,
the way of humility.

Triumphalism tries to make it to the goal
by shortcuts and false compromises.

The Lord truly rejoiced with the people,
who shouted out his name and acclaimed him as King and Messiah.

Humility does not mean denying reality:
Jesus really is the Messiah, the King.

Yet *at the same time* the heart of Jesus was moving on another track,
on the sacred path known to him and the Father alone:
the path that leads from “the form of God”
to “the form of a servant”,
the path of self-abasement born of obedience
“unto death, even death on a cross” (*Phil 2:6-8*).

He knows that true triumph
involves *making room for God*
and that the only way to do that
is by *stripping oneself, by self-emptying*.

To remain silent, to pray, to accept humiliation.
There is no negotiating with the cross:
one either embraces it or rejects it.
By his self-abasement,
Jesus wanted to open up to us *the path of faith*.

The first to follow him on that path
was his mother, Mary, the first disciple.
The Blessed Virgin and the saints had to suffer
in walking the path of faith and obedience to God's will.

Responding with faith to the harsh and painful events of life
entails (...) the night of faith.
Yet only from that night do we see the dawn of the resurrection break forth.
At the foot of the cross,
Mary thought once more of the words
that the angel had spoken about her Son:

“He will be great...
The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,
and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever,
and of his kingdom there will be no end” (*Lk 1:32-33*).

On Golgotha, Mary faced the complete denial of that promise:
her Son was dying on a cross like a criminal.
In this way, triumphalism,
destroyed by the abasement of Jesus,
was likewise destroyed in the heart of his Mother.

Both kept silent.
In the footsteps of Mary,
countless holy men and women have followed Jesus
on the path of humility and obedience.
The *silence of Jesus* throughout his Passion is profoundly impressive.
He also overcomes the temptation to answer back, to act like a “superstar”.

In moments of darkness and great tribulation,
we need to keep silent, to find the courage not to speak,
as long as our silence is gentle and not full of anger. (...)
The battle is between God and the prince of this world,
and that what is important is not putting our hand to the sword
but remaining firm in faith.