

Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday celebrates the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. But the triumph quickly turns to tragedy. Jesus is betrayed, rejected, forsaken and abandoned by his friends. Being punished by public officials is one thing. Being abandoned by friends, his own chosen ones, is another matter entirely. Now we know why we celebrate Easter. Because on Good Friday, in the mystery of the cross, Jesus takes upon himself all sin, all human brokenness, all division, all suffering, all evil. And in the mystery of the cross, the mystery of his great love for us, Jesus transforms all this into life, hope and peace. Through his violent death on the cross, the love of Jesus conquers sin and death. His giving wins us eternal life and freedom from death. Now we know why the Church proclaims that 'the wood of the cross becomes the tree of life'.

The disciples of Jesus fail him because of their imperfect faith. But Jesus remains resolute for Jerusalem and for the mission entrusted to him by the Father. This is precisely what Jesus comes to redeem and transform; forces of darkness that trap us and enslave us. But the resurrection of Jesus sets us free. The resurrection of Jesus gives us life. The resurrection of Jesus fills us with the radiance of God's wonderful light. But there is no resurrection without Good Friday and the mystery of the cross, the mystery of the Lord's passion and death.

In the face of the human frailty of his disciples, Jesus is faithful to his mission. Holy Week is about testing and strengthening our faith. We are conscious of our human weakness. The faithfulness and suffering of Jesus is a call to discipleship, a call to give of our lives, a call to go further in the service of others, a call to go deeper in our lives of prayer and spirituality. The disciple of Jesus walks the journey of the cross and stands in solidarity with the poor and suffering of our world, the victims of violence on our streets, the victims of the cyclone in Vanuatu, the dead and those who mourn after another plane crash overseas, those who have lost a loved one in recent time or are caring for a loved one now in difficult circumstances. Those who suffer today know something about the passion and cross of Christ.

As Pope Francis reminds us, the faithful disciple of Jesus brings hope, healing and joy in these difficult and challenging moments of life. Let the cross of Christ transform us; let the cross of Christ set us free.