

The 'Triumphant' Journey of Christ 4/14/19

We celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem to undergo his passion, death, and resurrection. Jesus sat on someone's donkey as the people waved at him with olive branches to welcome him into Jerusalem. The olive branches we carry is a symbol of victory, reminding us that no matter what we go through in this life, we are victorious if we follow Jesus. Our scripture readings today shed light on the redemptive sufferings of Jesus. We are invited to offer our own sufferings to him, hold our palms/olives and follow in his footsteps unto eternal victory.

Jesus' sufferings were the means of his victory. It's a victory he shares with us. Jesus' sufferings in his passion may be categorized into three: There is the mental, physical and spiritual aspects to what he suffered. The mental suffering, he endured would be those silent tortures of mind. St. Luke describes his 'sweat/tears like clots of blood that falls to the ground'. This is how it feels when your closest friend betrays you; your companions flee from you; you are condemned falsely; you have anguish due to some uncertainty. By his mental suffering, he reaches out to all those who suffer like him.

Jesus also suffered physically. He was tortured, beaten and battered. He fell down several times and was dragged along. Jesus revealed the depths of his suffering to Blessed Mary of Agreda. In that mystical experience, Jesus revealed to her the wounds that were made on his body including all the pints of blood he lost on the day. Jesus' spiritual suffering he bore is seen at that point when he cried "my God, my God why have you abandoned me". That moment when he felt abandoned by his divinity and disowned by his humanity.

Suffering is part of our humanity. There are several people who are experiencing all forms of suffering on a daily basis and seem to think that God has abandoned them. I recall ministering to some families of vegetates. I remember comments like 'why should they suffer like that? Does God truly love them? I remember how speechless I was and how assuring my visits became for to them. Jesus draws near to us and reaches out to anyone who goes through this path. By his own suffering, he has become the source of strength for all those who traverse this path (and sure, there are so many people). Let us draw strength from him for any suffering that we bear.

May we enter this week wholeheartedly, wielding our palm/olive branches, a symbol of victory, and follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Today, let us examine our life's vision; what is our own journey like? On Holy Thursday, let us rededicate ourselves to the Holy Eucharist; it is the Lord's body and blood. Let us examine how we receive him and how we act with him. On Good Friday, let us die with him; die to our sins. Let us accept his love for our lives

once again. On Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday, let us rise from the tombs of our sins, and pains and fears to a new life of holiness, glory, and grace.

Praised be Jesus Christ!