

Homily. Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion. 23/24 March 2024.

Just what are we celebrating in Holy Week? It's a good question for Palm-Passion Sunday as we embark together for the events that lie before us. Most importantly, it's who we're celebrating and what he did for us that matters. The short answer here is that we're celebrating Jesus who has saved us and our world from sin, from our destructive selfishness. He did this and he keeps on doing this out of love for each and all of us. He's achieved our salvation by his total and utter trust in God, taking on all of our worst, our pride, anger, hatred, greed and fear, having it all nailed up on the Cross in himself in his faithful, unselfish and trusting death.

Now, this doesn't mean that as if by magic we're suddenly unselfish, incapable of hurting others, our world and of ourselves. That we are still so capable is clearly obvious. It does mean that all of the worst in us and of us has been taken up into God and met with Divine understanding, mercy and forgiveness. It means that goodness and life triumphs over evil and death. It also means that if we enter into a relationship with Jesus, placing our faith in him, then his Spirit makes a home in us. This is the source of our salvation and holiness, God with us and living in us today.

This upshot of this is that over time we'll become in our thoughts, words and deeds more like our saving Lord. His hope, joy and faith, his comradeship with and service of others, his passion, sacrifice and self giving will all find an echo, a resonance in who we are and in the way we live. The focus of Holy Week is Jesus the Lord, the Christ of God, but never as something or someone distant from our lives here and now.

For what we celebrate in him we see being traced on the canvas of our lives today, even if falteringly. His journey is ours, as is his story and as will be his destiny, the fullness of life and the saving in God for all eternity of what is just, good, true, kind and holy within us.

I'll let St. Paul in Chapter 15 of his 1st letter to the Corinthians have the last word in preparing us for what this special week holds. Paul writes; Let me tell you something wonderful but difficult to fully understand. We're all going to be changed. In the resurrection scheme of things we're going to become immortal. Then the old saying will come true; Death is swallowed up by triumphant Life ! Oh Death, who is afraid of you now? In a single victorious stroke of Life, sin, guilt and death are all gone, a gift to us from our Lord Jesus Christ. For this dear friends always give thanks God, stand your ground and don't hold back. Throw yourselves into the work of the Lord today, confident that nothing you do for him is ever a waste of your time or effort.