

Palm Sunday – The Sixth Last Word of Jesus From the Cross – “It Is Finished”

April 4/5, 2020

In this most anxious and remarkable spring, among the many traditions, events and celebrations that have been postponed or canceled would be the Boston Marathon. Most of us have never dreamed even in our wildest nightmares of running twenty-six miles from Hopkinton to Boylston Street. Every year though, hundreds of runners and wheelchair athletes do make the trek. The elite runners finish at around two to two and a half hours. Most others take much longer. Some look battle scarred, bloody from falls, shaking from cold and damp, weak from exertion and dehydration as they limp and crawl and are carried over the finish line having only the strength to whisper, “It’s finished ... I finished!”

Near the very end of his life as he was in prison, St. Paul reflected that the rigors of a marathon were like a life lived serving Christ, poured out for neighbor, “As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have persevered.”

For a lifetime, Jesus had poured Himself out in obedience to the Father and in service to humankind: “though He was in the form of God, He did not deem equality with God something to be held on to ... rather

He emptied Himself taking on the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

For three years since His mother had set the sands in the hourglass falling ... "Do whatever He tells you" ... for three years He had preached to them, healed them, called them, forgiven them, argued with them, commissioned them, loved them. And now, all He had to give was poured out, the last of the grains of sand had fallen, His hour had come ... and gone. "It is finished." He had run the race. He had kept the faith. To the victor belongs the olive branch, the crown of the conquering warrior.

"It is finished!"

Amen.