

March 28, 2021

Palm Sunday

Jesus Christ is the eternal high priest who offers himself to the Father and to us. He makes his perfect offering to us and to the Father in Silence, in Service in Suffering and for our Salvation. I will focus on each one of those aspects of Jesus' perfect offering for the major celebrations of Holy Week. Palm Sunday, his offering in Silence, Holy Thursday his offering in Service, Good Friday, his offering in Suffering, and the Easter Vigil, his offering for our Salvation.

The Gospel of Mark more than the other Gospels presents Jesus who says very little. His Silence is just as significant as his words. He says just three words to Pilate who accuses him of being the King of the Jews, "You say so." Pilate is amazed at Jesus' silence. Pilate then tries to be Jesus' advocate when the crowd insists on crucifying him. He asks them, "Why? What wrong has he done?" To satisfy the crowd he gives them the guilty man instead of the innocent one.

The crowd wants to see a miracle, they want Jesus to show the power of God by coming down from the cross, they taunt him: You saved others, why don't you save yourself? Come down from the cross and then we will believe! Jesus is silent in the face of the taunts. He is silent even when people sincerely think for a moment that maybe Elijah might come to take him down from the cross. He does not try to answer the crowd, but he does ask for an answer from God, *My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?* Jesus cries out for every person who has ever felt abandoned by God. Jesus offers that prayer for us. The Father seems to be silent and so in silence, Jesus breaths his last. In silence, the curtain in the sanctuary was torn from top to bottom, the curtain that separated the holy of holies from the people. The centurion sees how Jesus dies in silence and believes.

This Holy Week take time in silence, even if it is for only a few minutes each day to meditate on Jesus and the meaning of Christ the eternal high priest, who offered himself to us and to the Father in silence.