

2020 April 05

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

Readings:

Palm & Procession, Matthew 21.1-11, "Look your King is coming to you, humble and mounted on donkey." (5a)

First: Isaiah 50.4-7, "I gave my back to those who struck me." (6a)

Psalm 22, "My hands and feet have shriveled; I can count all my bones." (17)

Second: Philippians 2.6-11, "And being found in human form, he humbled himself." (6a)

Gospel: Matthew 26.14-27.66, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." (21)

The glory now, and Then

A king mounted on a donkey, giving his back to those who struck him, not hiding his face from insult and spitting, (Isaiah 50.6) these are not the right type of qualifications or actions fitting a king of our understanding and desire. The list of things he subjected himself to is not over, and they are worse or even abominable to the ordinary onlooker. However, that is the King we have as our Master and Lord, and his invitation to us is to follow his footsteps.

This day of riding on a donkey was the day of the earthly and man-made glorification of Jesus the Nazarene, the Galilean, the Son of God, Son of David, the Redeemer of the world, the Messiah, the Prince of peace, the wonderful Councilor! It was also the day that finally the rulers fixed his earthly destiny up on the Cross at Calvary. These are the partial happenings of what St. Paul describes as, *'he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, and becoming obedient to the point of death on a Cross'*. (Philippians 2.7&8)

The full happenings began with his taking birth in a cattle shed in Bethlehem, continued in his fugitive life, living as a homeless, running for his life till the fullness of time, dying as forsaken and abandoned by his own people and apparently even by God! However, his story did not end there. In three days' time he was glorified, assumed a new and everlasting life, a new and imperishable body, and a Kingship, which no one can ever take away from him. He was enthroned as King and Ruler of heaven and earth and the netherworld with dominion, power and glory.

His invitation to us his followers is to follow the same path, which he treaded and thereby attain the same glory he attained. The lesson for us today is that the earthly glorification and adulation he received this day, the Passion/palm Sunday, is not at all real. This was just a fake glory. The very same people who glorified him abandoned him at the hour of his need and trial. The only one who did not abandon him was the Father, who for a while hid face from him. Jesus went through all these to make us sons and daughters of this same Father, who is also likely to hide his face from us for a while, but will definitely shine on us ever after. We too are invited to shine in his glory, and in the glory of the one who is enthroned as the everlasting and mighty King!

Fr. George

