

2021 March 28

Sixth Sunday of Lent, The Passion Sunday

Reading:

Palm blessing & Solemn entrance Gospel, Mark 11.1-10 or John 12.12-16.

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

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

Second: Philippians 2.6-11 "He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death" (8)

The Gospel: Mark 14.1-15.47 "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." (14.18)

Obedient to death

To be human is something wonderful. Most humans feel so. However, some do feel that being a human is too humiliating and degrading. What could have been in the past, and what could be today, the feelings of those treated as slaves, saleable objects, and stooges by the "lords," landlords, slave-lords, slave traders, sexual predators and perverts, etc.? Do they or could they have the above lofty feeling of greatness about being humans? All the above groups might be having feelings of being deprived of their humanity and dignity.

Most or many people in the world believe in some kind of a God, whose position and status are very lofty, incomprehensible, incomparable with that of humans, and definitely much superior to all creatures on earth. Think of this God, of those who place their Almighty God in the truly lofty place, becoming a human being, that is, coming down to the status of humans with all human frailties, weaknesses, privations, etc. Will it not be a great degradation? Jesus, the Word that was with God, the Word that had no beginning and end, the Word who was God, decided/agreed to be degraded to the status of a human person, to become a man on earth with all the frailties and weaknesses of human beings, suffering most of the indignities, and with a definite end.

The purpose of that downgrading birth was to move into the next downward plunge, to die, and that death being that of a condemned criminal, that too on the most humiliating instrument of death, the Cross! He had to die a death with the only last possession any other ordinary human being can have, if he or she so wish, namely *FAITH*, belief in the Almighty God who might be standing on the other side of death. It is a state of mind just slightly better than despair. It is a jump into the unknown, a plunge into the bottomless pit, a leap into the dark, 'the uncertain' world! Birth and death for Jesus was the sum total of all these.

We have the climax of this story in the Passion Narrative. When Jesus became man he lived and died with no *feeling* of certainty that he would regain his divinity. If it were otherwise his human birth would have become just a farce. When he died on the cross helpless and forsaken by everyone, apparently even by God, he did not have any guarantee other than his faith that he would be resurrected. His cry from the cross, "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*" (Matthew 27.46), expressed this helplessness. The *triumphant entry* into Jerusalem was to prove to us, that human adulation is momentary. Those who joined this triumphant journey, including his disciples, did not think much to walk away, leaving him alone, and even betraying him to join the powers that be to condemn and crucify the *triumphant one* to death. Whenever we are in deep pain, let us remember the above cry from the Cross.

Fr. George

(The readings of the day are given at the beginning. The numbers in parentheses refer to the quotes from them. Good to go through the readings beforehand to properly understand the Reflections)

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