

Palm Sunday 2021

All over the world, Christians gather during Holy Week, to experience those days which are not only the core of the Church's year, but the most decisive events in all of human history: the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Even those who do not share our faith know these days are sacred to us. Though COVID continues to affect our physical gatherings, this makes us more aware of what it means to be the Mystical Body of Christ – even if separated in body, we are united in the very Spirit of God. The hardships and sorrow so many people experience test our trust in God, with the words of Jesus certainly resounding in our hearts: ***“All of you will have your faith shaken.”***

Though the Passion is at the heart of Christian faith, the path God chose to redeem us, it is good to recall ***how obscure and unexpected it was for the people of Christ's own time.*** Before social media and CNN, most people were unaware of what was happening. Even for those present in Jerusalem for the annual Passover ritual, this seemed like nothing more than the execution of yet one more criminal, one more failed prophet – a brief spectacle to distract them for a bit; but then the world went on, just as before. Jesus passed by, carrying His Cross ... and then they walked away.

So too today, as we celebrate Holy Week, the world goes on. The days ahead will be marked by the same challenges and uncertainties, the same people, the same responsibilities and problems as before. The Lord's Cross does not remove human suffering from history. But the Cross does ***redeem*** that suffering, transforming it through grace from despair to hope, from seeming defeat to a revelation of God's mercy.

To those who did NOT walk away, to those who waited through the darkness of Good Friday and the emptiness of Holy Saturday, a hope was revealed that changes everything. In these most sacred days, Jesus passes by, carrying His Cross. The Body of Christ suffers today in so many forms. Even when Lent takes a path different from what we planned on Ash Wednesday, it still unites us in the very purpose of the season: ***to enter into the mystery of the Lord's Cross, to deepen our trust in divine grace and mercy, and to surrender our wills to God's will.*** Faith shows us that what began in obscurity and apparent failure at Golgotha, unknown to most of the people of His time, retains all its power to renew our lives and the world in OUR time. ***Because Jesus did NOT come down from the Cross, we see what God's love looks like, and with humble trust and renewed faith, we can believe.***