



DOMINICAN
INSTITUTE
OF TORONTO

www.dominicantoronto.org

@TDominicans

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This morning, even the liturgical norms ask that the preacher in his homily use the KISSS principle: That's K-I-S-S-S = keep it simple and short, silly!

Here we are on Palm or Passion Sunday, on the cusp of Holy week, one of the most significant moments in the Liturgical calendar, a time for us to ponder the depth of the mysterious and even paradoxical tenets of our faith. We're entering Holy Week with the Gospel of Matthew, the same evangelist with whom we entered Lent.

Matthew is a story-telling Gospel, a bantering gospel full of points and counter-points ("You have heard it said, I say..."). It is a story of ups and downs, of wonder and yet of normality, of transfiguration and yet of down-to-earthiness, of clear do's and even clearer don'ts, of scriptural dreams and fulfillments, a catechism story full of mysterious contrasts.

Today's Gospel has Jesus leading a parade into Jerusalem in the same way he was led by the Spirit into the desert. This entry is not all "hosannas and glory" as it might seem and have been for the political and military leaders who had preceded him through the same doors over the ages. The word "Hosanna" is an intense shout for help to a leader, a king, a warrior. It's not a "Horray". It means "Save Us Now!" The people here are looking for a leader...

And Jesus leads. His entry is, in a way, a challenge, a quarrel, a discord, a rejection and even an discreet acceptance of death. This entry is Jesus' 15 minutes of fame before he is thrown off-stage by people who did not want to hear the message. They would mock him, torture him, and then bury him, hoping that this would be the end. They presumed that his disciples and the crowds would simply forget about him.

Yet, his entry carries a deeper meaning: "For this is how you have treated the prophets before you." This entry shows how far Jesus is willing to go in order to show God's love for us... Facing the lies of society by paying the price! This is not a facile, easy-going, superficial love, but a love based on example, as the Letter of Paul to the Philippians this morning reminds us:



DOMINICAN
INSTITUTE
OF TORONTO

www.dominicantoronto.org

@TDominicans

“Christ Jesus, who, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, emptied himself, took the form of a slave in human likeness, and humbled himself to the point of death - even death on a cross.”

Though Jesus acknowledges this world and all its potential -- he also recognizes and names its serious liabilities.

Today the Spirit of Jesus calls us to enter into our Jerusalems and to present a word of truth to those who may end up being upset by what they hear, as we, hopefully, offer a counter-cultural life-style that shows what community, cooperation, solidarity and the common good can look like.

Even when the forces of dehumanisation may seem to be prevailing [COVID-19, Mid-Eastern wars, pollution of the seas, economic globalisation, forced migrant displacement] we are invited to ask ourselves again the important questions we find in Romans 8 and to offer up the same response :

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Jesus' call is scary, isn't it? No wonder the disciples all ran away. And yet, as the full story of the Passion this week is told (normally today but also on Good Friday), it is not there to make us fearful, but to fortify us and strengthened us through it.

May this week be a reminder of all that God has done in our lives to help us journey, especially as the Spirit is constantly walking at our sides, by offering us Jesus as the prime example of a real truth-maker in the world, and showing us clearly what the cost may be.

Michel Côté, OP