

PASSION [Palm] SUNDAY (A)

*“My Father, if it is possible,
let this cup pass from me;
yet, not as I will, but as you will.”*

It has been said that we come to the Passion of Jesus with hearts that are hesitant. When we ourselves touch the passion and suffering of our own human condition we do so with limited understanding, with reluctance and often filled with uncertainty. We are uneasy, uncomfortable with our suffering and that of others, especially those we love, because in the face of that experience we feel so powerless and more often than not we like to have the answers, we like to be in control and we want to make things better.

The Passion of Jesus assures us that there is another way to look at suffering in our lives. The whole of Christ’s life and indeed especially his passion and death was about trust in God the Father. Jesus experienced what we name the agony and the ecstasy, because only in letting go, only in embracing the cross did he both accept the inevitable human reality of physical death and the glory that came from that unselfish act. This act was truly free on his part and also truly redemptive. His passion was born out of an ardent and all consuming commitment to God the Father’s will. Jesus suffers unto death because of his fervent love of God the Father and because of his love for those whom the Father gave him, his disciples and followers then and those of all time including all of us.

This week and the Liturgies we will celebrate together remind us more than any other in the whole year that our suffering, as one author puts it: “places us in our real situation before Christ; receiving everything from him yet powerless on our own to recognize the fullness of his gifts.” As you pray this week I invite you to place a crucifix before you and sit and gaze there at the figure of Jesus Christ crucified. Allow your mind and heart to be penetrated by Jesus and his Passion.

Ask Jesus to reveal himself to you and to reveal as well his great love for you; knowing that on the cross he truly triumphed over death. Let us remember that this HOLY WEEK is not an enactment of certain historical events of long ago, rather, it is an invitation to live the present moment, however that may unfold for us. And in living this moment, to renew our desire to die to self in order that we may rise as new and changed persons. I leave you with this prayer by Edward Hays from his PRAYERS FOR THE DOMESTIC CHURCH.

*“Lord our God, Incomprehensible One,
Your sacrament of suffering,
the mystery of pain
has burst into our lives.
We have been offered the cup
of bitterness
so that we may share in the
sorrow of
your Son, Jesus, and so help heal
the sickness of our planet.*

*We thank you for this opportunity to explore
with those around us and with all the world,
the puzzle of pain.
May we only seek the fullness of life,
not rejecting the element of pain
inherent in all growth
and essential in each search for wholeness.*

*We, as disciples of Christ,
follow in the footsteps
of the Suffering Savior,
asking that this pain
have special meaning for us
and for all the earth.*

*Blessed are you, Lord our God,
who shares pain and suffering
as part of the mystery of life.”*

(2)