



CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY

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My Dear Fellow Parishioners, Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Fr. Stanley, Fr Alphonus and I once again greet you, in these very trying, difficult and challenging times. We hope you are keeping healthy and coping well within the circumstances.

We greet you on this day, Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week, the holiest of weeks in our liturgical calendar.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this year Palm Sunday and Holy Week will be celebrated without the physical presence of a congregation in any particular church building. This does not imply that liturgical celebrations are private. They are and remain public. As the Second Vatican Council teaches, the Liturgy has by its nature a “public and social disposition”.

In the Encyclical Letter *Mysterium Salutis* (September 3, 1965), St. Paul VI reiterated the teaching that the sacrifice of Christ, which is renewed in the Mass, is universal, that is, for the salvation of the whole world. This happens even when Mass is said in a so-called “private” form because, even if for some reason (and in these sad days due to the Covid-19 pandemic) there cannot be an assembly in the Church, it maintains a public meaning and contributes a lot ” to the salvation of mankind”.

In these pandemic days, a Mass celebrated by the priest alone is not the “priest’s Mass” and during Holy Week we will not have liturgical celebrations of the priest, but the “Service of God” celebrated by the priest in communion with the faithful entrusted to him as members of the “Mystical Body” which is the Church.

However, we should not be considered the genitive form “of God” solely as objective (service that man renders to God) but also as subjective (service of God to man). So, it is not only the community that serves God, but God too serves men giving them the “service of salvation” in Christ. In this regard, it should also be borne in mind that in the Mass the celebrant is Christ.

As we begin this Holy Week let us remember the greatness of the passionate love of God for men and women and the human environment.

For this love, he decides to enter Jerusalem, riding a humble donkey, to surrender to his enemies.

For his triumph, Jesus chooses the animal of the simple common people of the country, and, most importantly, it is a donkey that did not belong to him but that he borrowed for the occasion.

Jesus does not come in a gorgeous royal carriage or on horseback, as the Kings of the world do, but on a borrowed donkey.

Today, let us look at ourselves as that donkey that leads Jesus into the world, reveals him and speaks of him.

Let us consider how much Jesus needs us to carry him into our families, communities, workplaces, society and world.

Jesus borrows us to ride on us, to transform and renew us, to make us his, and he promises to return us to the Father to enjoy his glory for all eternity.

Let us spend this week contemplating Jesus.

Jesus is a “poor” King and, therefore, a King of peace who has chosen the Cross as a throne.

Jesus is a brave king - he enters Jerusalem knowing that he will meet the Crucifixion. Jesus is that wheat grain that falls to the ground and dies that it may produce much fruit (Jn 12:24-25).

With Jesus and for Jesus, the Cross becomes the instrument of elevation of all mankind and the entire universe in the glory of God (cf. St. Ignatius of Antioch).

This is the great Christian paradox that you and I are called to live. We are called to be like Jesus, meek, merciful, peacemakers, pure in heart and thirsting for God's justice. We can change the history of the world in a deeper and more efficient way than the powerholders for whom nothing is more important than power, prestige and status.

Therefore, the Cross is necessary and important in our lives. As disciples of Jesus, we must not only direct our gaze to the Cross, but together with Christ, we must live the need of the Cross so that for the Church and for the world, we can complete in our body what is still lacking in the Passion of Christ (Col 1:24).

All those who suffer, the sick, the hopeless, the prisoners, the tortured, the oppressed and those who are poor and hopeless need to know that in their situation they are not condemned to impotence. If they join their difficult hope or their painful despair to the hope of the Son of God on the Cross, they contribute to the construction of the true Kingdom of God much more actively than the many “architects” of earthly happiness.

We Christians, and all of goodwill, must do everything possible to alleviate the physical and spiritual suffering of humanity, but we should not forget the Beatitudes that Christ on the Cross confirms: *“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are now hungry, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who now weep, for you will laugh. Blessed are you, when people hate you and when they exclude and insult you and denounce your name as evil on account the Son of Man. Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven.”* (Lk 6:20-24).

Let us pray, my dear sisters and brothers in Christ, that we allow Jesus to enter into our lives in a very special way this Holy Week and transform us to be become more and more like him in every aspect and area of our lives.

Let this be a truly extraordinary Holy Week for all of us.

God Bless all of you!

Fr Eugene Vaz