

PALM SUNDAY

The victor is the one who gives their life for others, not the one who takes it away

ECCLESIA

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There was a time when people would often sing *Christus vincit, Christus regnat!*, which means, "Christ conquers, Christ reigns!" But what is God's victory? It is certainly very different from what we imagine.

In order to understand the way of God's victory, let us meditate on the meaning of some present day circumstances. First of all, let us look at how the multitude behaves. The masses shout, they sing, they pray! But they are always ambiguous. One day they are singing praises, and the next they are shouting blasphemies. One day they applaud with their hands, and the next they beat others with them. The multitude is frightening: they are too capricious and moody.

What about our faith? What is our response to Christ's call? Praying is not enough. Going to Mass is not enough. Nor is exercising charity enough to be a Christian. Jesus said: "The one who stands firm to the end will be saved." (Mk 13:13). And again: "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." (Lk 9:62).

True Christians are those who walk in Christ's footsteps every day with fidelity and perseverance!

But what is Christ's way like? Let us look at His behaviour. Jesus rejected Satan when he tempted Him with the way of Power. Jesus refused Satan because God does not win that way! Jesus fled when men wanted to proclaim Him king following His miracle of multiplying loaves. Jesus fled, because God does not win in this way! Jesus rebuked Peter when he tried to divert Him from continuing on the road to Jerusalem. Instead, Jesus walked decisively towards Jerusalem, towards His Cross because this is God's road, the road of His triumph!

And today we observe Jesus entering Jerusalem: His hour has arrived, the long-awaited hour! He appears meek, good, peaceful, apparently weak. In this way, Jesus taught us that goodness is the world's great strength. Truly strong men are good men. Truly strong persons are those who have conquered violence within themselves. The winners are those who give up their lives for others and not those who take other people's lives away. Have we taken to heart Jesus' lesson? Do we walk the way He does? Do we recognise ourselves in the decisions He made?

In the Passion there is not only Jesus present. there are also other characters who have prominent relationships to Jesus.

First there is Pontius Pilate: he is an indecisive man because he is empty. Whoever is

empty of ideals can easily condemn others ... even Christ. It was the same then as it is now.

Then there is Peter: he is hesitant because he is weak. Weakness is dangerous and is the basis for betrayal. Today, more than in any other age, weakness prevails and yet fidelity to God is paid with heroism.

There is also Judas: he is decisive about committing evil, because he is a proud man. Pride is the cancer of the soul. Pride is the root of all violence. Pride is a widespread evil. Pride is the beginning of our road to hell.

There are the high priests: they are people who knew the words but not the spirit of the Scriptures. They are people who used Scripture to bend it to their own perspectives, whereas they should have bent and converted to the Word of God.

Finally, there is Mary: she one who was determined to do good all the way up to the Cross, because Mary's heart was filled with humility. During Christ's Passion, Mary reveals all her greatness and Elizabeth's prophetic words come to mind: "Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her." (Lk 1:45). Mary is a believer: she is the creature who has trusted God blindly.

Which character do we have inside us? Jesus' Passion is still with us, so how do we act today during the Lord's final hours of suffering?

Perhaps we find ourselves behaving like Pilate or sometimes like Peter, or Judas or in even like the high priests...

So here is a resolution and a commitment meant for everyone: be like Mary. Act humbly and, just like her, follow the Lord on His way to the Cross: it is the way of God's triumph and our own victory...