

PALM SUNDAY 2 B 2009

YOU KNOW THAT THIS WEEK IS SPECIAL –

AND WE BRING TO IT ALL THE MEMORIES OF PAST HOLY WEEKS.  
WE WILL CELEBRATE THE LITURGIES WITH AN ARRAY OF RITUALS  
DESIGNED TO CAPTURE THE SENSES, MINDS AND HEARTS  
OF ALL OF US.

THESE LITURGIES ARE NEVER MEANT TO TAKE US BACK

SO AS TO RELIVE THE EVENTS.  
THE LITURGICAL PRAYERS, SCRIPTURE READINGS AND RITUALS  
ARE, RATHER MEANT

TO BRING THE MEANING OF THOSE EVENTS FORWARD  
INTO THE PRESENT DAY  
AND TO ADDRESS OUR LIVES AND CIRCUMSTANCES.  
WE ARE BROUGHT INTO THE PRESENCE OF JESUS, THE CHRIST,  
WHO, LIKE US, STRUGGLES TO DEAL WITH THE PRESENCE OF EVIL  
IN OUR WORLD AND IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES.

ON PALM SUNDAY WE BEGAN WITH A GLORIOUS PROCESSION,  
WAVING PALMS AND SINGING HYMNS OF PRAISE  
BUT ONCE WE GATHERED IN CHURCH WE HEARD  
THE PASSION AND THE SHOUTS TO CRUCIFY HIM  
FROM THOSE WHO DAYS BEFORE HAD PRAISED HIM

WE MAY WANT TO CRITICIZE THE DUPLICITY OF THAT CROWD,  
THEIR HOLLOW PRAISE AND FICKLE DEVOTION,  
BUT THE LITURGY FORCES US TO FACE THE DUPLICITY  
WITHIN OURSELVES  
AND THE WORLD AROUND US.  
HOW OFTEN WE HURT OTHERS  
AND WE ARE HURT  
BY SUCH FALSEHEARTEDNESS  
HOLY THURSDAY EVENING WE ARE IMMERSSED  
BY WORD AND ACTIONS,  
INTO THE MOST IMPORTANT TRUTHS AND PRINCIPALS  
OF CHRIST'S TEACHING AND HIS LIFE.  
HERE JESUS CONTENDS WITH EVIL  
SO THAT WE MIGHT BE FREE FROM IT.  
WHAT WE BELIEVE TOOK PLACE CENTURIES AGO  
HAS LOST NONE OF ITS RELEVANCE FOR TODAY.  
JESUS ASSURES US THAT  
HUMILITY TRUMPS PRIDE AND AGGOGANCE  
THAT SERVICE TO OTHERS BRINGS A JOY AND SATISFACTION  
THAT SELF-SEEKING, MATERIALISM AND GREED  
CAN NEVER KNOW  
AND THAT GENUINE INTIMACY IN FRIENDSHIP AND LOVE  
CAN ONLY BE EXPERIENCED TO THE EXTENT

THAT WE ARE WILLING TO LAY DOWN OUR LIFE FOR ANOTHER  
“DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

“LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVE YOU”

THE LITURGY OF GOOD FRIDAY

CONTINUES TO BRING JESUS’ ACTION AND WORDS

TO BEAR ON TWO GREAT SOURCES OF EVIL

FOR US PERSONALLY AND FOR OUR WORLD

**THE FIRST IS SELF-WILLFULNESS.**

AS JESUS EMBRACES THE CROSS,

HE SHOWS US THAT THE OBEDIENCE NEEDED

TO SACRIFICE OUR WILL

SO AS TO CONFORM TO THE WILL OF HIS FATHER

IS POSSIBLE.

**THE SECOND IS THE FAILURE TO FORGIVE.**

EVEN IN THE MIDST OF TREMENDOUS PHYSICAL PAIN

AND MENTAL ANGUISH OVER THOSE WHO WOULD

RATHER DESTROY HIM

THAN ACCEPT HIS MESSAGE,

HE EXTENDS MERCY AND FORGIVENESS.

“FATHER, FORGIVE THEM.”

RECENT OR CENTURIES-OLD HURTS AND ANIMOSITIES

ON A PERSONAL, GANG, TRIBAL, ETHNIC OR NATIONAL LEVEL

CONTINUE TO FEED SO MUCH OF TODAY'S VIOLENCE AND WAR

**WAS IT REALLY AS EASY FOR JESUS TO FORGIVE AS WE MAY BELIEVE?**

WE COME FINALLY TO THE NIGHT OF HOLY SATURDAY.

WE GATHER IN TOTAL DARKNESS.

JESUS' DEATH AND BURIAL

SEEM TO BE THE TRIUMPAL CRY OF EVIL

PROCLAIMING ITS POWER OVER ALL

THAT HE STANDS FOR.

BUT AS WE SIT IN THE DARK,

A SINGLE LIGHT FROM A MAGNIFICENT CANDLE ENTERS

AND THE DARKNESS BEGINS TO LIFT.

FROM THE LIGHT OF THE ONE CANDLE

OTHERS ARE LIT UNTIL THE WHOLE CHURCH

IS BATHED IN LIGHT.

HEARTS BEGIN TO STIR

AND THERE IS HEARD A HYMN AND SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

RECALLING GOD'S RELENTLESS EFFORT

TO DRAW HUMANITY FROM THE CLUTHERS OF EVIL

TO HIMSELF.

**THE GOSPEL PROCLAIMS THAT THE LORD IS NOT DEAD BUT RISEN.**

MEN AND WOMEN, YOUNG AND OLD,  
FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS AND HISTORIES  
ARE THEN CALLED FORTH.  
THEY SHARE THE DESIRE  
TO BE JOINED TO CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH  
AS HIS DISCIPLES.  
THEY ARE LED TO THE WATERS OF BAPTISM  
WHERE THEY DIE AND RISE WITH CHRIST.  
THEY ARE ANOINTED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT  
AND BROUGHT TO THE TABLE OF THE LORD,  
WHERE THEY ARE FED  
WITH THE DIVINE PERSON OF CHRIST  
UNDER THE APPEARANCES  
BREAD AND WINE.  
THE CHURCH RINGS OUT WITH HYMNS OF JOY  
AND WE THE ASSEMBLY SPILL OUT INTO A NEW DAY,  
EASTER SUNDAY.  
BUOYED WITH THESE LITURGICAL EXPERIENCES  
AND THE WITNESS OF OUR NEWEST MEMBERS,  
WE, THE CHURCH, GO OUT TO MEET TOMORROW  
WITH ALL ITS CHALLENGES.

WE BELIEVE THAT WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD

IS REAL AND TRUE,

WE KNOW THAT CHRIST IS VICTOR OVER EVIL,

AND UNITED WITH HIM,

SO ARE WE.

AND WE BECOMES THE LIGHT

SHINNING IN A VERY DARK WORLD

GIVING HOPE.

THE LIGHT IS ALWAYS THE SAME –

TO BE OF SERVICE

TO FORGIVE