

Palm Sunday, Year “A” – “Then what shall I do with Jesus the Christ?”

I wish to invite you my beloved parishioners, to join me in celebrating this joyful day. Palm Sunday marks the beginning of the Holy Week leading to the celebration of Easter. Today, Jesus enters Jerusalem to fulfill the mission for which He became Human and lived among us. Today, we have two gospel readings but the Passion narrative says it all; hence, there is no need for a long homily on this day.

The coronavirus pandemic has made it impossible for us to gather as a community to celebrate this joyful day. Celebrating Palm Sunday without the active participation of my parishioners leaves a lot to be desired. I stand alone in this chapel, but I can still envision the faces of my parishioners happily and joyfully carrying palms in procession and singing hosanna, hosanna, hosanna to the King of kings.

However, reflecting deeper on the significance of the crowd that welcomed Jesus with palm branches at His entry into Jerusalem, singing, “Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest,” and hearing the same crowd shouting before the Sanhedrin, “Let Him be crucified,” and even to the extent of preferring the notorious prisoner called Barabbas to Jesus, I see the weakness of the crowd.

There is no wonder, then, that the crowd was not present during the crucifixion of Jesus, and you know what, Jesus did not care about their absence.

In our effort to curtail the devastating effects of the coronavirus, all public masses have been suspended and our churches are empty with the crowd nowhere to be seen, leaving us as individuals to celebrate the solemnity of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem in our homes.

If you happen to be one of those who wonder if it is worth it to celebrate the Palm Sunday at home, let us remember that the truth

of this day did not come from the witness of the crowd but from certain individuals who stood for what they believed like Caiaphas, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and John, the beloved apostle. These are people who refused to sing along with the crowd. Their faith in God empowered them to believe, even when everything appeared impossible.

Are you discouraged due to this unprecedented moment in history we are living in? Let's not forget that this is only a "moment" in the history of our lives. This moment shall also pass away. Those who trust in God, whether alive or dead, shall rise to sing the praises of God who, by the death of Jesus on the cross, takes us out of darkness into His wonderful and marvelous light.

More than at any time in history, this is an opportune time to demonstrate our faith in God. If we worship God only when things are good, then our worship is mere eye service. Believing and worshipping God, even when there are more than enough reasons to deny His existence, is a sure sign of unalloyed and profound faith. And this is exactly what this moment calls for.

Although we may not gather together today to sing Hosanna to the Son of David, let us, wherever we may be, lift up our voices in worship to welcome Jesus who comes into our hearts and minds to remind us that God is with us. God is still our God who loves us and gave His beloved Son Jesus to die on the cross for the salvation of the world.

Yes, the crowd cannot serve the Lord because the crowd has no mouth, no eyes, no ears, and, most of all, no thinking faculty. It is the individual endowed with mouth, eyes, ears, and a thinking faculty who has what it takes to worship the Lord.

And in this lies the greatness of our faith: Political rallies, meetings, concerts, sports, etc., are not taking place because people cannot gather together, but this is not so with religious worship. Although we stand apart, we are still a united people by virtue of our baptism. We

have what it takes, wherever we may be, to join our voices together in worship of God, whose love has been imprinted in our hearts. This is thanks to Jesus' victory over sin and death on the cross.