

Homily Palm Sunday Yr A 200405
Palms Matt 21:1-11. Isa 50:4-9a. Ps 31:9-16. Phil 2:5-11. Matt 27:11-54

Most of us have had to carry heavy burdens in our lives. We are all carrying the burden of lockdown and isolation today, through the Covid epidemic.

Do we force ourselves to carry on regardless, putting a brave face on it? Whilst all the time churning away inside and feeling sad and dreadful!?

We do not carry it alone. God tells us through the Bible ***“Cast all your anxiety (worry) on him, because he cares for you”***. Look it up! 1 Peter 5:7.

Have you ever tried to put yourself in Jesus shoes? The crowd rapturously hailed him at his entry to Jerusalem – laying their clothes in front of him, strewing his way with palm leaves and flowers. They really did love Him!

Jesus knew what lay ahead and it was a dreadful burden. He knew he was going to be betrayed, arrested, subjected to false trial, tortured, made to struggle in agony carrying the cross of his death; and the most degrading and humiliating, agonising death.

And the crowds? Were they fickle hypocrites? Some of them might have been, but, NO, they loved that man who was also God (although they didn't know it), and their cheering welcome was from the heart.

But their leaders manipulated them emotionally, they gave false religious teaching and turned the crowd into a baying mob, shouting “Crucify Him!”.

Did Jesus struggle on stoically, putting a brave face on it, acknowledging the cheers of the crowd – whilst churning away miserably inside?

No! The secret lies in Psalm 31 we have just heard, verse 14 in the original, but the 4th verse in today's translation. ***“But my trust is in you, O Lord. I have said, “You are my God”. My times are in your hand!”***

Yes, Jesus slipped a couple of times. He was God but fully human – in the Gethsemane garden His humanity cried “Do I really have to go through with this – but thy will be done”.

On the cross, writhing in pain, he said "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In His Divinity of course, Jesus knew He wasn't forsaken – but He had to feel that forsakenness in His humanity.

As we struggle with our own personal burdens, AND THIS CURRENT ONE, we can try to struggle on stoically, putting a brave face on it – or we can really learn how to trust. This trust comes by truly handing everything over to the Lord from deep down within our hearts.

But we are also fully human! We may occasionally try to briefly drag it back, taking the misery back again into our own souls to worry about it!; but as soon as that happens, recognise it and hand it back over again - and true peace returns to our souls.

Despite the agony and the pandemonium, Jesus continued in serenity and peace. We know that all was beautifully restored in the Resurrection and Glory, but his peace was there, deep down within him throughout His misery.

At the passion, if Jesus fell prey to one split second of resentment or one moment of anger – and he allowed Himself to dwell on it and worry about it, he would not have been able to save us. Everything would have been lost. But he didn't.

Throughout this ordeal, as unjust as it was, Jesus acted like a lamb led to slaughter. He didn't defend himself. He didn't fight back. Instead, all Jesus did was say, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34).

All of us will face false accusation or abuse or betrayal at some point in our lives. It's likely that most of us already have.

As we have heard the passion today, let's resolve to be as merciful as we can to everyone who has hurt us, ridiculed us, betrayed us, or tarnished our reputations. Above all, let us trust the Lord. **"Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you"**. 1 Peter 5:7.

St Andrew of Crete said: ***'It is ourselves that we must spread under Christ's feet, not coats or lifeless branches or shoots of trees, matters which waste away and delight the eye only for a few hours. No, we have clothed ourselves with Christ's grace, or with the whole of Christ — "for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ"***

So we can also have His peace, no matter what we have to do, if we fully trust in him. ***"But my trust is in you, O Lord. I have said, "You are my God". My times are in your hand!"***
(Psalm 31:14)

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