

What follows is a brief homily for after the proclamation of the Passion

The Sign of Contradiction

Our liturgy today begins with a celebration of the entry of the Lord into the Holy City and then rapidly focuses in on the Crucifixion of the Lord, this year from the *Gospel of Matthew*. What a contrast! We go from Jerusalem where the crowds were celebrating Jesus, crowding him, singing hosanna, to Golgotha, where Jesus was mostly deserted by all as he died on the cross.

There are contradictions even deeper than that. Mankind was disobedient to God. Jesus was obedient. Mankind was immersed in material possessions. Jesus was only concerned about the spiritual. Mankind was selfish, each person only concerned with himself or herself. Jesus was self-less. He sweat blood the night before, but he accepted the role he would play in the drama of the Kingdom. Mankind feared death clinging to life. Jesus embraced death recognizing death as a passage to eternal life. Mankind had embraced physical life and sacrificed his spiritual life. Jesus surrendered his physical life so that we can possess spiritual life.

What is it that we celebrate this Holy Week? Is it the historical events of a little less than 2,000 years ago? Perhaps, but this is only a small part of our commemoration of Holy Week. What we celebrate this Holy week is our participation in the Paschal Mystery, the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. On Holy Thursday we join the disciples at the Last Supper and the Garden of Olives. We remember that the mandate to serve is fundamental. The symbolic washing of feet reminds us of that the mandate to serve is fundamental to our being people of the Eucharist. On Good Friday, we call up the courage to stand at the foot of the cross and ask our Savior to allow us to join our lives to his death. At the Solemn Easter Vigil, we remember the promises of the Hebrew Scriptures and rejoice at the fulfillment of the prophecies of salvation. At all the Masses of Easter we reaffirm our Baptismal vows and recommit our lives to living for the Kingdom of God.

Come and pray with us this week. Come. Come and celebrate the Life that makes all life meaningful.