

«Behold, I make all things new »

(Revelation 21 :5)

Lent Retreat 2022

I AM A MESSENGER

John 12: 12-19

After spending his clandestine and then his unconcealed life in Galilee and outside Jerusalem, it is time that He enters it. Before entering Jerusalem, he left the Jews and the world a historic event: raising Lazarus from the death. Opinions about this event mixed and divided. By this, we feel Jesus intentionally wanted this confusion to happen before His death, so His resurrection can come as a rebuttal to each one who denied faith of Him overcoming death.

Jesus started His journey as a King, but unlike the other kings, he had a humbleness that no other king before Him had. With Him there is a reversal of roles. The King is thus a poor being Who walks towards the cross. This incites our curiosity and our wish to learn what the message Jesus Christ wants to deliver is, and what it is that This King Who is like no other king wants from us. The numbers of the crowd which grew day after day started to understand the nature of Jesus's message at a time when the numbers of the Pharisee supporters started to diminish. The kingship of Jesus scared those Pharisee, and they plotted to revenge against him.

Let's have a look at Jesus's Kingship via the symbols that accompanied his entrance to Jerusalem: from the palm branches, to the donkey that was tied to the side, to the kids among the crowds, to the disciples' lack of understanding about what was happening around, all indicate that entering Jerusalem in this festive and humble manner is an entrance that is covering a huge secret behind it.

Yesterday was Palm Sunday, but Palm Sunday is also today. For each day there is a stance. So, will I join the crowd surrounding Jesus and the ones supporting his entrance to Jerusalem or will I be one of the observers and maybe one of the opponents as well? Every day has its palms and every situation has its testimony.

Maybe we are like the disciples who do not understand the events Jesus was going through especially at first sight, just like they haven't understood many of the things Jesus said or did throughout His life with them. Of course, the disciples later understood Jesus when they remembered His words and His acts and when they meditated them. You can look at this as a review of life in the Light of Jesus Christ, of His acts and of His words. In this review of life, we are bound to discover that we occupy a special place in Jesus and in most of the events of the bible. Accordingly, everything Jesus did was for each one of us. This review is also suitable to help me see what my positions towards Jesus Christ were. I therefore take the new decision according to the gift of the Spirit that resides in me.

In this retreat, you are among the crowd that was entering Jerusalem with Jesus Christ. You shall go through difficult times; therefore, put these hard times in the category of Jesus's sufferings/passion. The fatigue of the retreat is a blessed one as it generates a constantly renewable way of thinking. You shall die for your sins just as Jesus died for you. This too is a tiring feeling, but after this feeling there is resurrection. After the death of sin, you shall triumph with the Resurrection of Christ to become yourself a messenger of this Resurrection.

So, if you feel loved, don't hesitate to return this love with love. If you feel created, the Lord – your creator – granted you the gift of life to live it with love. And since you are free, your freedom leads you to discover the Will of God in your life; you shall then repent and choose to follow Jesus which will in turn lead you to live a state of happiness with God. You then become a messenger of Love for the others who will in turn live this journey.

Eventually, everyone is a messenger because everyone is loved. The most important thing is not to stay at the doors of Jerusalem during the celebration of entrance. Let us then cross the road with Jesus to witness His sufferings, deaths, and resurrection. It is then that we understand that He did all this because He loved us.

After Resurrection, Jesus appeared to the bearers of the fragrant and told them "go quickly, and tell the disciples, He is risen from the dead." The hour of sending the message came after admitting that the Resurrection happened. Jesus, therefore, doesn't want us to stay in Jerusalem. He rather expects us to go out of it and roam the entire earth bearing this announcement of love, so that all the earth becomes the New Jerusalem. This is what we chant during the Byzantine Easter "shine, shine, New Jerusalem for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."