

Holy Week... the climax of the Mission of Jesus Christ



We enter the Holy Week in which the deepest meaning of Jesus's life is unfolded and in which His teaching becomes incarnated in His own words and actions.

Palm Sunday (Passion Sunday); on this we commemorate the triumphal entry of

Jesus into Jerusalem as Messiah, as King and as a Paschal Lamb. Jesus was marked for death by the Jews because He was an advocate of love. We are born on this earth to live but Jesus was born to die. Jesus knew that He was marked for death and yet He was not afraid of it. He marched towards death because He had a deep sense of mission, He had a purpose in life to bring salvation to humanity which was possible only by His death on the Cross. What is our mission? On this we are invited to see the contrast between the *way to Jerusalem* and the *way to Calvary (Cross)*. The people who followed Him on the way to Jerusalem were people who had seen his miracles, received something from him and wanted more, were based on crowd mentality without any personal conviction but on the other hand the handful of disciples who followed him to Calvary (Cross) had received new life, were ready to give their lives to Him, who had personal choice to follow Him because they had personally reflected and evaluated the consequences of their following and it was their personal conviction that kept them close to Jesus during His passion and death. Do we follow Him only on the way to Jerusalem or do we follow him on the way to Calvary, to the Cross? The real test of faith and love is to be united in the midst of life threatening- difficulties. *Follow Jesus to the Cross that He will follow us to our resurrection.*

Maundy Thursday; the day before Jesus' death commemorates three important actions of Jesus. First, the institution of the Holy Eucharist and the Priesthood. Jesus instituted the Eucharist on the Last Supper. Eucharist commemorates the passion and the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. In instituting the Eucharist, Jesus also instituted the priesthood. He said "Do this in remembrance of me." The priests are to make present the redemptive sacrifice of Christ through the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church. Second, Jesus gave the apostles the new commandment of love, "I give

you a new commandment that you love one another just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciple if you love one another (Jn 13:34-35).” So, it is the commandment of the Lord, it is a new commandment and it is the only distinguishing mark of disciples of Jesus. And third, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Jesus did this to teach his disciples a lesson on service and servant leadership. Through this Jesus gave the proof of His great love for His disciples, Jesus gave an example of His wonderful humility. Therefore, our true vocation is to love and serve God in loving and serving our fellow human beings after the greatest example of our Lord Jesus Himself.

Good Friday; why do we call ‘Good Friday’ good, even though something bad, unjust and inhumane happened on that day. An innocent one without sin and without any crime, tortured, humiliated and nailed to death of the Cross. The only crime He committed is that He advocated love and incarnated it in His words and actions for all creation. Is it a crime to advocate love? Why do we call it ‘good’ then when an innocent one was put to death on the Cross on that day? It is a good day because on this day, our Saviour did something without which we could never get redeemed. We glory in the Cross of Christ. As St. Paul said” God forbid that I should glory in anything except in the Cross of Christ (Gal 6:14).” The death of Jesus on the Cross is a glorious event, it is a joyful event. Jesus’ death was not an accident, not passive resignation to it but an active embrace of death, He marched toward His death and conquered it for our redemption. The death of Jesus on the Cross is the fulfillment of the plan of His Father. Jesus Christ did not die to make God loving but He died because God was loving. He death on the cross is the sacrifice which Jesus made once for all for our sins, He was the lamb that was slain for us and on our behalf. Cross is the throne from where Jesus reigns and from His mercy flows, the beatitudes are the rules of His Kingdome and the citizens of His kingdom are those who live by His rules and follow Him to the Cross. “If anyone would come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me (Lk 9:23).” Therefore, *Cross is the only way to reach God and Cross is the only key that opens the gates of Heaven.*

Easter Sunday (Resurrection of the Lord); Christ is Risen, Alleluia. The resurrection of Jesus is one of the central mysteries of Christian faith. “If Christ is not risen from the dead, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is vain (1Cor 15:14).” The death and resurrection of Christ is

the foundation of the Christian faith. The resurrection of Jesus gives us the hope that one day we shall also be like our Lord. The Gospel gives the experience of the 'empty tomb' as the sign of Jesus's resurrection to new life. The disciples saw the empty tomb and believed what He had said that He will rise again on the third day, but their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. Mary Magdalen recognized Him when He said to her 'Mary' and other two disciples who were on the road to Emmaus recognised him in the 'breaking of the bread.' The crucifixion is a historical event; the resurrection is a faith event. The Risen Christ enters a completely new way of living. The post-Resurrection texts all indicate that. He is not recognised at first by even his intimate friends, He is everywhere that his disciples happen to be and His new Body, the means of His being visibly present among us, is the community of His disciples. After the resurrection experience the timid disciples who were hiding in the closed room for the fear of the Jews turned to be fearless witness and great evangelizers of the Risen Lord. The Risen Christ turned *their mess into message, their test into testimony, their vices into virtues and their trials into triumphs*. Their lives were transformed into new life. Easter is all about new life. Therefore, the celebration of Easter reminds us that we have the same mission as Peter and Mary Magdalen and the other disciples of Jesus to bear witness to Risen Lord and take Him to the world and transform the world. ***The Lord is truly risen, alleluia. To Him be glory and power for all the ages of eternity, alleluia, alleluia (Lk 24:34, Rev 1:6).***