

## Homily - Palm Sunday YB

“Palm Sunday is the great doorway leading into Holy Week.” At the beginning of the week, with great hope and anticipation in the multitudes that were following Him, they exclaim “Hosanna to the Son of the David” in fulfillment of the Scriptures. With the multitudes proclaiming and singing his praises in the light, there is fear and treachery in the dark...a plot to put this man to death. At the end of the week, it appears that the darkness has overcome the light, that “Hosanna” is now being drowned out by chants of “Crucify Him!” As he is nailed to the wood of the Cross, throne from which he will reign for ever, he draws all to himself and offers men and women of every age the gift of redemption. As we make our way through this Holy Week, we know that the light overcomes the darkness...that life triumphs over death with Easter joy. And yet, there is still the very real struggle in us being played out...a struggle between good and evil. And so we ask ourselves, what side am I on?

To help us answer this question, I propose to you the spiritual exercise from St Ignatius of Loyola, the “Meditation on Two Standards.” This spiritual exercise challenges us to see the real struggle between good and evil in the world today. We begin by prayerfully imagining a battlefield with Jesus, the commander-in-chief of good, on one side calling all people under his standard (his flag). He calls men and women to follow him with humility, patience, generosity, purity, poverty, and sacrificial love. Next, we imagine on the other side of the field Satan, the chief enemy of all that is good, inviting people under his standard (his flag). He entices people away from Jesus through the lure of riches, the pursuit of worldly honour and success, pride, and lust, and he distracts them from the true meaning of life with constant busyness and amusements. Finally, put yourself on that field and honestly consider: Which side attracts you the most? In what ways are you pursuing the standard of Christ? In what ways do you find yourself lured by the standard of the devil?

Confronted with the drama of this week, and this meditation, we can no longer sit on the fence...what side, what standard are you going to choose? One side leads to eternal life...the other to death.