

PALM SUNDAY (C)

AM I WILLING TO SUFFER FOR CHRIST?

Isaiah prophesied about the coming of the Messiah. The Messiah was ready to lay down His life. He would not rebel, and would not turn back. He would give His back to those who beat Him, and cheeks to those who would pluck His beard. He knew that God would be His helper, and He would not be disgraced.

We start the Passion Week today, and we commemorate the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. A journey which led to His passion and death. He knew what was going to happen to Him, so why was He eager to go? This was to fulfil the promise He made to His Father, and was foretold by the prophets. He was willing to die to save the world.

He started sacrificing Himself on the night before He died, by offering Himself as food and drink to His disciples. He told them to serve one another as He had been their servant even though He was their Lord and Master. This is what St. Paul told the Philippians: "Christ Jesus, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of servant, being born in the likeness of men."

In order to conquer sin and death, He put down His divinity, and submitted Himself to His accusers. He was silent when He could have spoken to defend Himself. He could have fought to conquer His enemies, but He told the disciples to stop using the sword, and healed the one whose ear was cut. His close friends deserted Him; He borrowed someone's donkey, and He dined in someone's house. He stood alone at the time He needed companions to support Him. But in all circumstances, it was the Father's will that He desired to submit Himself to.

Even in His suffering, He continued to bring reconciliation and salvation to people; Herod and Pilate became friends again, and the

thief was promised eternal life. This was why He willed to die a shameful death.

Am I ready to suffer for Christ? How can I do His will? He reminds me of some things I have to be watchful of, and what to do, that Satan is around to sift me like wheat, so I should pray always so that I may not enter into temptation. I have to submit my will always to the will of God. I should learn to be a servant offering myself to others. There are certain times I have to be silent because silence is golden. Truth should always be my guiding principle.

If I do not pray and submit my will to the will of God, then my life will be full of empty promises, like the disciples. Then my aim will be to achieve worldly greatness and love of money, like Judas, and not desire to live a true Christian life. I will be filled with despair when I am faced with problems and difficulties in life.

The message of St. Paul to Timothy encourages me to persevere in my struggles to follow the footsteps of Christ. He told him: "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David - that is my gospel, for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. Therefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. The saying is sure: If we have died with Him, we will also live with Him; if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us; if we are faithless, He remains faithful - for He cannot deny Himself," (2Tim.2:8-13).