

Deacon Ray's Palm Sunday Reflection

Saturday morning, I was startled by the sound of the early morning television news. I heard the voice of someone crying as they were interviewed saying "today, I am waking up without my father."

I did not have to give much thought as to what this poor crying soul was speaking about. Too many in our world, our nation, our state, our community and perhaps our own families have had to speak similar words that echo the pain and loss of a loved one. The virus, for now, has become the scourge that has consumed us in every aspect and taken so much away from us spiritually, emotionally, physically and financially.

Just about one year ago at this most solemn and significant time for us as Christians and especially for us as Parishioners of St. Paul's, we had much to celebrate and anticipate.

We began each Palm Sunday Liturgy in the Lower Hall, where we read the Gospel of the triumphant entrance into Jerusalem by Jesus. Msgr. Pereda blessed the palms and with crucifix, candles and singing, we processed through the parking lot and for the very first time into our newly and majestically restored Church of St. Paul the Apostle. It was a moment I know I will never forget and cherish forever; a true gift from God. How I remember the tears streaming down the faces of some of our Parishioners-mine included.

Today, we perhaps we cry again. There can be no blessed palms, no crucifix and candles and song, no procession and no celebration for us, the faith community of St. Paul the Apostle-the virus has seen to that.

But the virus and nothing, I repeat, nothing, can ever take from us the triumphant entrance of Jesus into our hearts. Nothing can ever take from us what has been built as the foundation of our faith; the new and eternal Jerusalem won through the passion, death and glorious Resurrection of the Son of God! This is the love of God personified and the salvation of all humanity!

If there is reason to cry today as we prepare in some holy way to celebrate and remember the Institution of the Holy Eucharist and Ministerial Priesthood on Holy Thursday, the Passion and Death of Our Lord on Good Friday and await the glory that was meant for all to see on Easter Sunday, let us cry with complete joy-the joy of faith, the joy of hope and the joy of certitude that the God who created us through His divine love was, is and will always be with us-Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

May you all have a blessed Holy Week.

Our Lady of Sorrows, pray for us!

St. Joseph, pray for us!