

Passion Sunday of the Lord's Passion
March 29, 2015
At the procession of Palms

Brothers and Sisters, Palm Sunday brings us to the culmination, if not the end, of Lent's long and sometimes difficult journey. The penitential practices of the season have made us ready at last to enter the holy city with Jesus, to die and rise to new life with our Lord and Savior.

The blessing of these branches and our procession is not an historical reenactment of that first procession 2000 years ago. It is, however a living memorial to the saints of the past with whom we join in the ongoing dying and rising of people of faith through the centuries. The cross, the Book of the Gospels, and each of us here this morning, are all signs of the living presence of Christ in our midst as we process together to the Holy City.

Homily after the reading of the Passion

Today's Proclamation of the Passion was from the Gospel of Mark. This is the Gospel that often presents crowds of people pressing on Jesus to be healed. Jesus heals many people in this Gospel, but he then he directs them, "Tell no one about this." Jesus silences devils who call out from the possessed that they know who He is.

Why the secrecy? Why does Mark present what scripture scholars would call, the Messianic Secret? The message behind the secret is that no one can understand the healings or the Messiah until they understand the cross. Jesus accepts the cross in obedience to the Father, opposite of Adam's disobedience.

He accepts the cross to defeat the power of hatred and death through sacrificial love. When the centurion looked up and saw the love flowing from the man whose crucifixion he had supervised, he was the first to proclaim, "Truly, this is the Son of God."

It is only from the perspective of the cross, of sacrificial love, that we can understand the wonders of the Lord. Viewed from the cross, there is no longer a secret as to who Jesus is.

Nor should who we are be a secret. We are Christians. We are called to love as Jesus loved. We are called to sacrificial love. The world needs to see us emptying ourselves in obedience to God. The world needs to experience His Love flowing through us.

We wear crosses around our necks. This is more than jewelry. Nor do we

wear crosses only to remind us of the event that took place on Golgotha two thousand years ago. We wear crosses to remind us to proclaim with our lives that the Love of God is not a secret.