

Palm Sunday: Present Before the Cross

Ave Maria Catholic Church, Palm Sunday, March 24, 2024, Fr. David M Vidal

The Cross is a sign of contradiction. It signifies suffering, humiliation, and death. However, Jesus takes the Cross. He embraces the Cross and tells us to take our own crosses and follow Him. This is a difficult message. Who will be able to endure it?

Present before the Cross of Jesus are three attitudes: rejection, indifference, or love.

First, the rejection of the Cross is represented by those who say: ***“Let Him come down from the Cross, and then we will believe Him”*** (Matthew 27: 42). These people enjoy the multiplication of bread and many other miracles of Jesus. These people hear with delight the parables and admire Jesus’s wisdom. However, the cross must not be part of Jesus’s message. These people demand: ***“Come down from the Cross, and we will believe you.”*** They are ready to believe in Jesus only if the cross does not touch their lives. Unfortunately, without the cross, there is no redemption; without temporal suffering, there is no eternal glory.

The second attitude is indifference. The indifference before the Cross is represented by those who ***“After fastening Jesus to the Cross, divided His clothes among them by casting lots. And then sat down there to watch”*** (Matthew 27:36). They are spectators. They are indifferent to the suffering of Jesus. Their minds are on the clothes they could have and the money they could gain. They have worldly desires and little goals. They are indifferent to the big questions: What is truth? What is justice? What is love? What are eternity and salvation? They are too busy for those questions; their attention is on a little money and a few garments.

The third attitude is love and compassion or co-passion. The love and sharing of Christ’s sufferings are represented by those who stand with Mary at the Cross of Jesus. The words of Saint Paul describe their lives: ***“I have been crucified with Christ; the life I now live is not my life, but the life which Christ lives in me”*** (Galatians 2:20). This kind of friends of Jesus Christ say with St John Chrysostom, ***“All wealth and honors... are not to be compared with the splendor of your Cross.”***

Are you ready to say Jesus, I know that you invite me to carry my daily crosses, I love the path you have traced for me, and I want to embrace the cross you allow me to carry for your love?

Then, a friend of the cross resolves to take the daily crosses with love by saying: ***“My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready.”***

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, who stood at the foot of the Cross with Jesus, give us the heart to love Jesus as She did. Amen