

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion (4/5/09)

Today begins the solemn celebration of Holy Week. In many ways Lent has been preparing us for this week, as it does every year. What do we bring from our Lenten experience to this week? We know that Jesus brings the fullness of his humanity to this week, meaning that the fullness of his vulnerability for our sake is made manifest in the cross. Jesus feels the utmost abandonment from his friends, his people, and even from his Father. Many times we too feel that God and everyone else has abandoned us.

But the sense of abandonment does not conquer Jesus. He still calls out to His Father in his prayer of abandonment. And he teaches us that God never really abandons us. I know that is hard for us to understand when we are in the midst of the cross. But we have Jesus' love for us on the cross to remind us that He has not left us alone. He is always interceding for us with the Father. His perfect obedience in suffering led Him to the resurrection. May it also lead us to that victory.

This Holy Week let us bring all of our loss and disillusionment with life to the cross with Jesus and through his passion and death may we find new life in Christ. Amen!

Easter Sunday (4/12/09)

May the blessings of the Risen Lord be with you! Easter is such a joyful season as we are drawn into the mystery of the infinite love of God for us through our Lord Jesus Christ. God loves us so much that He would allow his son to offer himself for the redemption of the world. But Jesus would make the same sacrifice on the cross if only to save one of us from the consequences of our sins. Jesus' love is intensely personal. He wants the best for us, to live each day and for all eternity in an awareness of God's love.

In this Easter Season we are invited to enter into the awesome gift of our salvation and contemplate in wonder the depth of God's love for each of us. Then, strengthened and renewed by that love, we share the good news of God's redeeming and sacrificing love for us by loving and forgiving one another. And the world is recreated!

May we become Christ for one another in our sacrifices of love, knowing that the Risen Christ sustains us. And may our hearts always allow God's love to fill us each day to be His Love in the world. Amen!

Second Sunday of Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday (4/19/09)

The Octave of Easter, during which each day is celebrated as Easter Sunday, concludes with the Second Sunday of Easter, called Divine Mercy Sunday. Divine Mercy Sunday recalls the infinite mercy of Jesus, earned through His passion, death and resurrection, ready to be poured out for the forgiveness of our sins. All it takes is the asking, or more accurately, the proper asking. Jesus' infinite mercy is available for anyone who asks with even the smallest intention of repenting for their sins and changing their life to try to avoid sin. All we have to do is crack our hard hearts just a little bit and Jesus is waiting to jump in.

The mistake some people can make is to ask for forgiveness because they are sorry, in a general way, for the harm their sins may have caused, but they have no real intention of changing their lives. This is dangerous because one of the conditions of repentance and forgiveness is a firm intention to "amend our lives." A firm intention comes from analyzing the patterns of why and how we sin and then taking active steps to try to change those patterns with God's grace.

Divine Mercy Sunday is celebrated by praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy on our Rosary beads. In the Chaplet we pray for God's mercy "on us and on the whole world." This is a very powerful prayer. Can you imagine how pleased our Lord is with this act of charity on our part? May God bless us in our ministry of praying for each other and the whole world, and may we experience the depth of Jesus' mercy and love in our own hearts. Happy Easter!

Reprinted from Father Frank's From the Pastor's Desk from the April 15, 2007 bulletin.