

Homily – Palm Sunday

April 5, 2020

Today's gospel describes a time of intense darkness – like the chaos at the beginning before God said “Let there be light.” In the gospel there is confusion, disillusionment, fear, anxiety, denial, betrayal as well as an earthquake, the tearing of the Temple veil, the opening of tombs . . . Chaos!

My dear sisters and brothers, we live in a time of great confusion and spreading chaos. There is increasing darkness across the world. There is great fear and anxiety, especially among the poor, the vulnerable, the immigrant, the refugee. There are forces of evil at work among us, sowing chaos, causing divisions, ignoring severe inequalities, disrupting the justice and peace that God wills for his creation. And now, because of the pandemic crisis, for the first time in our lives, we are not gathering in person in this cathedral or in our parishes today because of the danger and risks. We are physically separated. But on this Palm Sunday we gather in faith, communion, and solidarity with one another! We are all in this together. God is with us! The Holy Spirit is with us!

Besides the darkness there is a fundamental saving truth in today's readings: all that takes place is in accord with God's plans. God is present – although at times we may call out with Jesus: "Why have you abandoned me?" Jesus prayed during his agony: "not my will, but as you will." He was "obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Pope Francis tells us that the coronavirus is not God's judgment on humanity, but a call for us to live differently than we have been. We are called to "choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others."

Today, as disciples of the Lord Jesus, we stand with Mary and the beloved disciple at the foot of the cross. We pray for those who have died, those who are ill, those who are lonely -- as well as for all health care workers, first responders, those who keep our grocery stores open and those who help stock them. We pray for each other and for our Holy Father. We are united in our faith, hope, and love for God and one another. Our Lady of Guadalupe, you are with us. Help us get through this difficult time with trust in God's love for us.