

Palm Sunday. Homily Deacon Ken

It seems like we were just here.

Oh, I don't mean in this church. I mean at the base of a hill, a lonely hill, a daunting hill. Here we are --- looking up at a hill we'd rather not climb. In fact it's a hill we would probably trade anything and everything to NOT have to walk up.

Weren't we just here?

Not that long ago we celebrated another Easter --- another celebration of joy and family and new life. A celebration of God's great love for us, perfectly shown through the life and person of Jesus --- a life that led him up this same hill. And here we stand again. And Jesus is once again reaching out to us --- asking us to make the journey with him.

Weren't we just here?

What happened? Wasn't everything supposed to be different? Wasn't Easter supposed to have changed everything? Are we really being asked to climb this hill again? And next year? And the year after that? And the one after that?

My friends, the reason we are standing at the foot of this hill once again is because the journey we are about to take this week is not a one-time thing. It certainly was for Jesus. That much is true. Jesus gave his life on that hill once and for all and for all-time. This singular act of love changed absolutely everything and unleashed on this world a power beyond our wildest imagination.

And while this act might have been singular for Jesus, our participation in this act is anything but. You see, what we are about to enter into this holiest of weeks is nothing short of the pattern of each and every human life – a template for the journey each human being makes, but one that has special meaning for the followers of Jesus.

We take this journey knowing that there will be many times throughout our lives (in some cases daily) in which we will once again find ourselves at the bottom of this hill --- facing some sort of difficulty, some sort of heartache, some sort of challenge, some sort of tragedy. And Jesus will ask us once again to follow in the steps he first made two thousand years ago.

And we are asked not to simply try to avoid the challenges in our paths, but embrace them.

We are asked not to try to bury our sorrow but to work through the pain. We are asked not to give up in the face of disappointment but continue placing our feet directly in Jesus' footsteps. And we are asked not to ignore our sin, or deny our sin, but to bring it to the light, take responsibility for it, and allow the healing love of God bring about something beautiful from the ashes of it.

We do so not because we don't have a choice, but precisely because we do. We do so because we believe, in faith, that the top of the hill is not the end of the story, the pain and suffering are not the end of the story, the sorrow and loneliness are not the end of the story.

And that my dear friends gives us courage – courage to accept our imperfect lives that don't always work out as we had planned, accept a world that sometimes hurts us rather than heals us, accept uncertainty rather than know every step and every outcome.

That's what this week is all about --- taking Jesus' hand (and letting him take ours), and walking with him up this lonely hill together. Doing so is an act of faith. Doing so is an act of trust. Doing so is an act of love.

May we have the courage to make this journey this Holy Week with the Lord --- but not just this week, or this season, but every single day --- every time we find ourselves in need of another Easter morning.

Keep Safe Be Well.

Peace be with you all my Sister and Brother in Christ Jesus