

As we enter Holy Week beginning with Palm Sunday: First, please remember if you have not done so...Place a Crucifix in your home, along with a Palm Branch Blessed at a Palm Sunday Mass. According to Exorcists, both are very powerful Sacramentals for household protection.

With that said: I would like to start with this excerpt from Michael D. O'Brien's book "Theophilus": A "novel" based on the "various written" and "fictional oral" exchanges between St. Luke and Theophilus, as St. Lukas investigates the person of Jesus, and this new religion. Below, from the book, is an eyewitness account from a 40 year old woman (Baptized into this new faith) & her experience of being with her parents, as a little girl, as she saw the Passion of our Lord unfold. In the novel St. Lukas is translating for Theophilus.

Holy Week in Jerusalem – (Thru the eyes of a young girl w/ her parents)

"It seemed as if everyone came out to meet him at the gate of Gold, waving palm branches and declaring him king. The chief priests and elders of the Temple tried to silence us for fear of the Romans, and also because of their dislike of Him. But nothing would silence the crowd. Indeed, it seemed to us that King David had returned and that the restoration of Jerusalem was now at hand. I had never seen such happiness on my parent's faces. My father shouted the old prophecies of Messiah & my mother wept for joy as she placed a palm branch in my hand.

Almost a week later, on the day of Passover, our King was taken out thru the Ephraim Gate, the gate of shame, it was called, to a hill we call Golgotha, the place of the skull, where criminals are executed. There they put him to death.

On that day our family was with the crowds. We had gone to Gabbatha, the judgment place of Pilot; because my parents were sure that there our Messiah would throw off his chains and destroy the oppressive Romans. But it did not happen like that. When my parents saw the soldiers bringing him out, beaten and bloody, dragging his cross, their hopes turned to disappointment & anger. They cried out that he had deceived them & deserved to die for it."

-I thought...

"Where were the missing thousands who had praised him? Were they hiding in their homes or going about their business as if nothing was wrong?"

**After reading this novel, as your priest, it occurred to me to ask:
What are our expectations?**

-Do we miss the Suffering Servant (Isaiah & Psalm 22), or the one who empties Himself in Holy Obedience to the Cross (Philippians 2)?

OR IN MARK'S GOSPEL Passion Account:

-Do we also believe that the woman wasted the perfumed oil? - Not understanding how precious Jesus IS.

-Like Peter, James & John - Become upset when Jesus speaks of His Cross.

- Or even, at times in our life, denying we ever belonged, or followed Jesus?
- Expecting an Earthly Kingdom – Power – Authority – Riches?
- Or like Judas who wanted a Political Messiah & King to physically crush Rome.
- At this moment they don't understand why Jesus would accept a Cross.**

-Pilot wants to please the crowd – So he missed Jesus.

-In the noise & pandemonium – The Crowd, the Gentiles, the Soldiers, All who mocked Jesus: The Chief Priests, Elders, Pharisees, & Scribes:

-In their Pride, Expectations, Preconceived Beliefs & Ideologies - They All missed Jesus as Messiah.

-Do we sometimes go from adoring Christ to rejecting Him?

-Does Jesus at times not meet our expectations?

-Because of our own preconceived ideas & notions.

-Do we miss Him in the noise & clutter of the crowd?

I remember the first time pumping Gas with the new (now old) gas-pump/ Video screens screaming news & weather at me (I thought, please shut up so I can pump my gas in peace).

-How in the world do we find Jesus in this incessant busy and noisy clutter?

-Find time for some blessed silence – To just rest in Him (OUR ADORATION CHAPEL IS A GREAT PLACE TO VISIT)!

What are our expectations? – Do we fashion Jesus into an image that is created via our own needs, desires, emotions, or worldly expectations – If so, we can certainly become angry, confused, frightened, or even apathetic.

-Jesus HAS revealed Himself to the world – Through the One, Holy, Catholic, & Apostolic Church He founded – Through our rich Oral & Written Tradition, via the Church, bound into the Canon of Scriptures we call “The Bible.”

-Thus, It is the Church, via the Holy Spirit, that gives us the proper image of Jesus - And some great Catholic Bible Commentaries and resources as well.

And this image of Jesus is nurtured as we participate in the Sacramental life of His Church - Where Jesus desires to give us His very Essence & Being.

Jesus is A King who is Holy and Otherworldly - But who is also an intimate, loving, & merciful friend.

-A King who desires to bring us a confidence about who we are, what we believe, and where we are going.

This homily was recorded at the 5pm, Sat., March 27 Palm Sunday Vigil Mass.