

COLUMNISTS

Crosses accepted lead to redemption

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Matthew 26:14-27:66. (R1) Isaiah 50:4-7. (R2) Philippians 2:6-11.

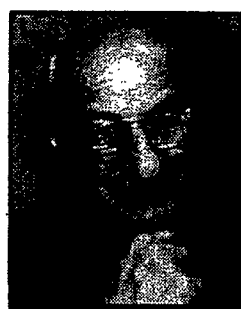
Palm Sunday begins Holy Week. It is preferably called Passion Sunday to put the emphasis of Holy Week where it belongs, namely, on the passion, suffering and death of our Lord.

The church in her liturgy on this Sunday emphasizes not so much the blessing of the palms as the procession. The palms refer to resurrection; the procession to death. Jesus came to Jerusalem not to be hailed as a king, but to die like a king. Thus Jesus rode not to a palace, but to the temple, the place of sacrifice.

And he rode on a donkey, not on a warhorse like an Alexander the Great on Bucephalus, for his conquest was not to be of earthly kingdoms, but the conquest of death; hence the palms. The word "passion" signifies a feeling, but a strong feeling — a feeling so strong that it affects the body and causes it to suffer a change; hence the name "passion."

For instance, anger can redden the face or bleach it. Hatred can make one livid. Fear can make the hair white. Byron in his "Prisoner of Chillon" begins thus: "My hair is gray, but not with years. Nor grew it white in a single night, as men's have grown from sudden fears."

The passion of our Lord refers not only to the sufferings inflicted on his



a word
for
sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

body by his torturers, but also those sufferings inflicted on his body by the intensity of his feelings.

Thus in the Garden of Gethsemane, our Lord's feelings were so intense that they caused him to sweat blood. These feelings were generated by three thoughts.

First, by the thought of his betrayal by one of his own apostles. Secondly, by the realization of the sufferings that he foresaw with neon clarity would be visited upon him the next day.

Thirdly, by the realization that so much of his suffering would be in vain, because so many would damn themselves to hell despite his great love. Love would not be loved!

Betrayed by a friend, denied by another, abandoned by all, save his mother, he had nowhere else to turn but to his heavenly Father. Like a little child, he cried out to him, "Abba, Papa, if possible remove this cup." It was not possi-

ble. So his Father sent him an angel to strengthen him to carry his cross.

Christianity does not take away our crosses. But it strengthens us to carry them and to sanctify them as Jesus did his.

In reporting the execution of the Thane of Cawdor, Shakespeare in *Macbeth* says, "Nothing in his life became him like the leaving it; he died as one that had been studied in his death."

Though Jesus lived as a carpenter's son, he died like a king! His first three words on the cross were spoken around 12 o'clock; and they were spoken for others: "Forgive them ... This day you'll be in paradise ... Behold thy mother ..." Then darkness and a three-hour silence ensued.

Near 3 o'clock the silence was shattered by a loud cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" These words were not a complaint, but the first verse of Psalm 22, a prophetic psalm, describing the death of the Messiah and his final triumph. Next followed the words: "I thirst"; then "It is finished." And finally the seventh word: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit" — again from a Psalm, 31:6. In other words, Jesus seemed to be reciting the Psalms from the cross. He died praying!

The beauty of Jesus' passion is that he freely chose it. "I lay down my life of myself, no man takes it from me." At every Mass we say: "Before he was giv-

en up to death — a death he freely accepted" Because he freely accepted his sufferings and death, they became redemptive. Likewise, if we freely accept our daily crosses, they too shall become redemptive.

If we learn to carry our daily crosses freely, as Jesus did his, then we too can help save sinners as he did.

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming, N.Y.

Daily Readings

Monday, April 1

Isaiah 42:1-7; John 12:1-11

Tuesday, April 2

Isaiah 49:1-6; John 13:21-33, 36-38

Wednesday, April 3

Isaiah 50:4-9; Matthew 26:14-25

Thursday, April 4

Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14; Corinthians

11:23-26; John 13:1-15

Friday, April 5

Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Hebrews 4:14-

16; 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42

Saturday, April 6

Genesis 1:1-2:2; Genesis 22:1-18;

Exodus 14:15-15:1; Isaiah 54:5-14;

Isaiah 55:1-11; Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4:4;

Ezekiel 36:16-17, 18-28;

Romans 6:3-11; Matthew 28:1-10.

Even defeat can be a victory

I hope and expect that I will go to many basketball games involving my children over the next 15 years, but I doubt that I will ever enjoy one more than the game two of them played last week. And they lost!

Abby and Nate are 8-year-old twins. They signed up in January at the local park for their first experience with basketball, and I volunteered to coach. We were all assigned to be in a league for 8- and 9-year-olds.

Our team, the Kings, is moderately talented but getting better. We lost our first two games, then won our next three.

Last week we were scheduled to play the mighty Bullets, a team that had beaten us earlier in the year. We thought we had a good chance until we learned that three of our best players were playing in a championship



faith &
work

BY GREGORY E. AUGUSTINE PIERCE

game in the intramural league at their school at exactly the same time as our game.

I called the coach of the Bullets, but he was either unwilling or unable to change the time of our game. "We're going to get killed," the kids on the Kings wailed. "It will be a massacre!"

My son and daughter were especially anxious. "Please, Dad, call the other

coach up again. Cancel the game. Forfeit."

"No," I explained. "We are going to play the game with the five players we have left. It doesn't matter whether we win or lose. All that matters is that we play as well as we can."

But in the pit of my stomach I wasn't looking forward to the game either.

When we got to the game, I gathered my players and gave them my little pep talk.

"Play hard on defense and slow down the offense," I told them, "and you'll be able to stay in the game."

Well, those second- and third-graders did just what I told them. The five of them played every minute of the entire game and they played their little hearts out. The score at the end of the first quarter was 0-0, a definite

moral victory for the Kings. At the end of the second quarter, we were actually ahead, 4-2! The score at the end of three quarters was tied 6-6, and I was beginning to think we might just pull off the upset of the century.

But my kids were exhausted by this time. The Bullets had more players than we did and were able to rest a little. Plus near the end their best player drove the baseline twice for two quick baskets and we lost 10-6.

As the buzzer to end the game sounded, our three other players arrived from their other game, not in time to play but in plenty of time to celebrate the great job their teammates had done. We all felt as if we had won the game.

And, in a way, we had.

Pierce is co-publisher of ACTA Publications, Chicago.

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MUSIC OF HOLY WEEK

PASSION (Palm) SUNDAY, MARCH 31

11:30 AM Blessing of Palms, Passion, Eucharist
Choral Music—Gregorian Chant: *Hosanna filio David, Christus factus est*; Hymn: *All Glory, Laud, and Honor*; Lotti: *Surely He has Borne our Griets*; Bach: *O Sacred Head*. Organ Music—Lemmens: *Fanfare*; Schriener: *Lyric Interlude*.
(other Masses at 5:15 on Sat. and 8:00 & 9:30 on Sun.)

HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 4

7:30 PM Liturgy of the Lord's Supper
Homily—Fr. Joseph Sasso. Choral Music—Peeters: *Gloria, Agnus Dei*; Duruffé: *Ubi Caritas*; Mozart: *Ave Venum*; Gregorian Chant: *Pange Lingua*. Organ Music—Alain: *Choral Phrygien*; Edmundson: *Pange Lingua*.
9:00 PM Adoration until midnight

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 5

2:30 PM Liturgy of the Lord's Passion
Homily—Fr. Sebastian Falcone. Choral Music—Gregorian Chant: *Christus Factus Est, Reproaches*; Lotti: *Surely He has Borne our Griets, Miserere*; Dubois: *Adoremus Te*; Hymns: *O*

Sacred Head, Were You There, Sing My Tongue.

7:00 PM *Stabat Mater* by Pergolesi with Isabel McCarthy, Jane Gunter-McCoy, soloists & Chrisanne Gates, organist.

HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 6

7:30 PM The Easter Vigil
Choral Music—Gregorian Chant: *Exultet, Solemn Alleluia, Vidi Aquam*; Peeters: *Gloria, Agnus Dei*; di Lassus: *Resurrexit sicut Dixit*; Hymn: *Jesus Christ is Risen Today*. Organ & Trumpet Music—Boyce: *Trumpet Voluntary*.

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 7

11:30 AM Festive Easter Eucharist
Homily—Fr. Frank Lioi. Choral Music—Gregorian Chant: *Victimae Paschali, Vidi Aquam, O Filii et Filiae*; Peeters: *Gloria, Agnus Dei*; di Lassus: *Resurrexit sicut Dixit*. Organ Music: Boyce: *Trumpet Voluntary*; Dupré: *Meditation*; Lemmens: *Fanfare*.
(other Masses at 8:00 am & 9:30 am)

Brink Bush, organist • Thomas G. Donohue, choirmaster