



March 28, 2010 Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

Your attitude must be Christ's...he emptied himself and took the form of a slave being born in human likeness...obediently accepting even death, death on a cross! Philippians 2: 5, 7, 8

Dear Friends;

This month we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the assassination of Oscar Romero the Archbishop of San Salvador, El Salvador. When selected to be archbishop his country was in a state of social upheaval. Most of the wealth of the country was controlled by an oligarchy of about 14 families. He was considered to be a safe choice.

However, the violence and grinding poverty of his people moved him to speak out: "Some want to keep a gospel, so disembodied that it doesn't get involved at all in the world it must save. Christ is now in history. Christ is in the womb of the people. Christ is now bringing about a new heavens and earth."

What Archbishop Romero reminds us is that our remembrance of Jesus is not mere historical pageant or sentimental journey. Faith in Jesus is a lived reality. It becomes concrete in us when we love and when we die to egoism, sin and injustice.

And so changed by Jesus' own death and resurrection we are moved to ease the suffering of others. We are not called just to weep like the women of Jerusalem but like Simon who helps Jesus carry his cross we are called to shoulder the burdens of others. Our faith is not just about some future heavenly reward but about a future that is born here and now in our efforts to enact the justice of God's reign.

Recently Fox News showman Glenn Beck attacked Christians who preached the need to effect change in the injustices in social and economic systems. He suggested these Christians were promoting "communism and Nazism." Archbishop Romero once said, "If you feed the poor they call you a saint, but if you dare to ask the question why are people poor, they label you a communist."

The scriptures today challenge us to see Christ not in puffy clouds in some future time, but to find him here and now. Christ resides among those who suffer. And God chooses the oppressed within history and makes them the means of salvation for the rest of society just as God chose the suffering servant, the crucified Christ to bring salvation to the world. To follow Jesus is to seek solidarity with those who suffer and to seek their liberation. That is not communist, socialist or Nazism it is Christian.

This means we need to cast off our false gospels of economic success and humble ourselves before Christ. In the 8th century Andrew of Crete suggested that Palm Sunday calls Christians "to spread ourselves under Christ's feet, not coats or lifeless branches, or shoots of trees made of matter which will waste away and delight the eye for only a few hours. We have been clothed with Christ's grace... so let us spread ourselves like coats under his feet."

In this week that we call Holy, I urge you to enter into the mystery of Christ's Passover by attending and entering into our liturgies with hearts open and ready to receive love.

Peace,

Fr. Ron