

Palm Sunday “*Eloi, Eloi lema sabachthani*”

Fr. Frank Schuster

And so it begins. My friends, we have entered into Holy Week. The Passion preaches for itself. We have entered into the drama of our salvation. Reflecting on this past year and everything we have experienced, Jesus’ last words on the cross in Mark’s gospel are poignant, “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani*”. My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? These last words from Jesus on the cross are from psalm 22. You may wish to pick up a bible this week and prayerfully read it, because in this psalm contains Jesus’ understanding of why his death on the cross was salvific for the human race. The last part of psalm 22 is quite revealing. Towards the end the psalmist says, “All the ends of the earth will worship and turn to the Lord...All who sleep in the earth will bow low before God; all who have gone down in the dust will kneel in homage.”

This piece is thought provoking because, on the cross, Jesus entered into the very heart of what it feels like to be godforsaken, what it feels like to succumb to sin and death itself, so to truly become for us the sacrificial Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Let’s hear the psalmist again, “All who sleep in the earth will bow low before God; all who have gone down in the dust will kneel in homage”. That is God’s agenda.

My friends, Jesus’ last words on the cross also invite us to truthfully acknowledge the areas of our lives that just simply feels godforsaken right now, that simply feels broken. When were those times when we just felt like we betrayed Jesus maybe for a handful of silver or worse? When were the times when we felt spiritually asleep, unaware at how much we took the Lord for granted until he was taken away from us? When were the times that we exchanged charity for violence toward those around us, in our thoughts perhaps, in our words or even actions?

You see, now more than ever we recognize that there is an inherent dysfunction at the core of our being, a place where we feel godforsaken. Jesus’ last words on the cross are evidence that Jesus truly understands how we feel. If we ever feel like we are falling from the Father to hell itself, Jesus now stands in between. What this means is, hell itself cannot stand in the way of God’s love for you. That is what the cross says. The cross is God yelling out, I love you. I will go to hell and back for you. And, I will never abandon you.

My friends, I invite us to make Holy Week a retreat experience for you and your family. It has been two years since we have been able to worship in person during Holy Week and so this will be a very special year. The Holy Triduum begins with Holy Thursday at 7 PM. The Triduum continues with Good Friday at 7 PM with the opportunity for Stations of the Cross at 3 PM earlier that day. Our Easter Vigil will be at 8:30 PM. Easter Sunday Masses will be at our

normal Mass times. We are challenged this week to stay awake with the Lord and to experience in our hearts the love of God, the sacred story, and the divine conspiracy that offers salvation.