

Today in our liturgical celebration, we celebrate Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week; according to our religious tradition it is the most sacred week of our faith experience. Ever wonder why it is called Holy Week? Holy Week is a two-edge sword, one of the most brutal and destructive weeks in the civilization of any nation; violence, injustice, conviction of an innocent person, release of a known criminal, abuse of power, betrayal, crucifixion and finally death, yet one of the most hopeful weeks in mankind's history, "God so loved the world that He sent his only Son so everyone who believes in him might eternal life"; hope, the Eucharist,( our spiritual food for our earthly journey), hope, love, service, forgiveness, reconciliation and our ultimate reality the Resurrection. During this week the Apostles experienced great pain and fear, then eventually the benefit, the Resurrection.

In celebrating this Passover, it would be a turning point in Jesus' ministry, the Apostles and His followers. As was their custom at the beginning of Passover week, they would celebrate their religious history in Jerusalem. In Mark's account of the Passion, the chief priests and the scribes were seeking a way to arrest and put him to death but not during the festival.

On the first day of the Unleavened Bread, when they sacrifice the Passover Lamb, his disciples said to him, where do you want us to go and prepare for to eat the Passover? Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water. Follow him. Wherever he enters say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples? Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there. After the setup had been completed, Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples. As they ate, Jesus mentioned that one of them would betray Him. With that announcement, they were alarmed and stressed, each proclaimed surly it is not I Lord? His signaled to them was in the form of this response, saying the one who dipped with me in the dish but they still were unable to figure it out. Following that announcement Our Lord consecrated the bread and wine and shared the Eucharist with them, this is the Apostles' first Mass. In this first section, we realize the others did not know Judas, they knew only what he did, and (he kept the finances) but not his character, because all his work was in secret, in darkness, and his work was not open to anyone of them. We know when that happens we know what happens to often; stealing, embezzlement, lying and hierocracy. Jesus knew Judas, but Judas thought he was fooling the group; but as Judas continued his destructive behavior; self-deception, and deceit, destroying himself as a person. Now we realize the scriptural insight, what does it profit a person to gain the whole world, be miserable and empty as a human being with no character! St. Paul reminds us that the empty barrel s makes the loudest noise.

Following their Eucharistic celebration, they sang and then proceeded to Mount Olives. Upon their arrival Jesus proceeded to inform them their Faith would be shaken. As usual, Peter responds not his faith, the others' faith might be shaken, and they would scatter `but not him.

The one thing the Apostles failed to realize, Passover week would require spiritual change. At the beginning of Lent we were likewise invited to make a spiritual change, return our whole heart to the Lord. In looking over the landscape we see change everywhere; in nature, with the caterpillar and also in the seed which Jesus talks about in various parables in each one of them there is pain, but pain is part of the process so that we can receive the benefit, the fruit, and the gift we have been anticipating.

In speaking about change we see it in nature; the caterpillar and the seed! Both go through a process, a caterpillar to become a butterfly and a seed to become a fruit.

Today we have an opportunity to see that during their mentorship with Jesus, more worked needed to be done with them; in turn of courage, faith, hope, love, truth and service we were missing. In today's gospel, we see their fear, lack of faith, no commitment to Jesus, selfishness, arrogance, and not strong in prayer, as Jesus prayed in his agonizing moments, they fell asleep. The Passion days are difficult and brutal, but the message they would receive as they waited in fear would commission them to out into the world and respond

with truth and service.

Today we have an opportunity to create for ourselves a qualitative change in our spiritual lives. The Apostles had areas that stopped them from changing and not return their whole heart to the Lord. When roadblocks and areas of resistances were removed they could go as lambs among wolves because of their faith and courage. Then they could bring a new set of values to the world. Like them as we remove our roadblocks, resistance, selfishness, and fear then we can return our whole heart to Our Lord for the good our God, neighbor and our self. In short these are some of the benefits that Palm Sunday presents to each and every one of us.