



The Holy See

CELEBRATION OF PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

*Saint Peter's Square
XXX World Youth Day
Sunday, 29 March 2015*

[Multimedia]

At the heart of this celebration, which seems so festive, are the words we heard in the hymn of the Letter to the Philippians: *“He humbled himself”* (2:8). *Jesus’ humiliation.*

These words show us *God’s way and, consequently, that which must be the way of Christians*: it is humility. A way which constantly amazes and disturbs us: we will never get used to a humble God!

Humility is above all God’s way: God *humbles himself to walk with his people*, to put up with their infidelity. This is clear when we read the the story of the Exodus. How humiliating for the Lord to hear all that grumbling, all those complaints against Moses, but ultimately against him, their Father, who brought them out of slavery and was leading them on the journey through the desert to the land of freedom.

This week, Holy Week, which leads us to Easter, we *will take this path* of Jesus’ own humiliation. Only in this way will this week be “holy” for us too!

We will feel the contempt of the leaders of his people and their attempts to trip him up. We will be there at the betrayal of Judas, one of the Twelve, who will sell him for thirty pieces of silver. We will see the Lord arrested and carried off like a criminal; abandoned by his disciples, dragged before the Sanhedrin, condemned to death, beaten and insulted. We will hear Peter, the “rock” among the disciples, deny him three times. We will hear the shouts of the crowd, egged on by their leaders, who demand that Barabas be freed and Jesus crucified. We will see him mocked by the

soldiers, robed in purple and crowned with thorns. And then, as he makes his sorrowful way beneath the cross, we will hear the jeering of the people and their leaders, who scoff at his being King and Son of God.

This is God's way, the way of humility. It is *the* way of Jesus; there is no other. And there can be no humility without humiliation.

Following this path to the full, the Son of God took on the "*form of a slave*" (cf. *Phil 2:7*). In the end, humility also means *service*. It means making room for God by *stripping* oneself, "*emptying oneself*", as Scripture says (v. 7). This – the pouring out of oneself – is the greatest humiliation of all.

There is another way, however, opposed to the way of Christ. It is worldliness, the way of the world. The world proposes the way of vanity, pride, success... the other way. The Evil One proposed this way to Jesus too, during his forty days in the desert. But Jesus immediately rejected it. With him, and only by his grace, with his help, we too can overcome this temptation to vanity, to worldliness, not only at significant moments, but in daily life as well.

In this, we are helped and comforted by the example of so many men and women who, in silence and hiddenness, *sacrifice themselves daily to serve others*: a sick relative, an elderly person living alone, a disabled person, the homeless...

We think too of the humiliation endured by all those who, for their lives of fidelity to the Gospel, encounter discrimination and pay a personal price. We think too of our brothers and sisters who are persecuted because they are Christians, *the martyrs of our own time – and there are many*. They refuse to deny Jesus and they endure insult and injury with dignity. They follow him on his way. In truth, we can speak of a "cloud of witnesses" – the martyrs of our own time (cf. *Heb 12:1*).

During this week, let us set about with determination along this same path of humility, with immense love for him, our Lord and Saviour. *Love will guide us and give us strength*. For where he is, we too shall be (cf. *Jn 12:26*).