

## Homily for Palm Sunday

The proclamation of the Passion of our Lord stirs us deeply to come face to face with the death of our Lord. And this year our new inspiring crucifix helps us fix our attention on what Jesus did for love of us. But, why did Jesus die on the cross? “To save us from our sins,” is the answer we all know.

To take in the meaning of the cross of Jesus we need to confront the reality of what sin actually is. Sin is the free choice of human beings to become enemies of God. Sin happens when we choose self over and against God and God’s ways. Sin is living in the flesh, as St. Paul defines sin, which means living as if God does not matter, living in such a way that we fight God and God’s ways, living in such a way that we choose self over God, and our own will over god’s will. Sin is the choice to become an enemy of God. Sin is the choice to become a lover of the world, meaning investing ourselves in the passing pleasures that this world has to offer at the expense of our integrity. Sin is the choice to fill our lives with so much that there is no room for the service of God and humanity.

However, why did he have to die, and die such an ignominious death, to save us from our sins? Why could He not have simply declared that God is a loving God and will forgive everyone?

Waving a wand and saying, “You’re all forgiven,” does not convey how terrible is our rejection of God. The cross of Jesus stands through all time as the Father’s decision to let His Son die on the cross as proof of how seriously He takes Sin.

When God, who is love, became flesh in Jesus Christ, we continued to choose to be His enemies, even to the point of crucifying Him. And even to this day, we continue to choose to be His enemies in the way we treat each other.

You see, God hates sin. He hates it because sin causes such great suffering, for ourselves and for others.

So after showing us what it is that we do to God and to each other, the Cross of Jesus stands as the point in time where God's loving kindness conquers evil and reverses the human choice for self against God and God's ways.

On this Palm Sunday, I invite you to gaze upon our new cross and pray with me as I pray the "Prayer before a Crucifix."

Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus,  
while before Your face I humbly kneel,  
and with a burning soul pray and beseech You  
to fix deep in my heart  
lively sentiments of faith, hope and charity,  
true contrition for my sins,  
and a firm purpose of amendment,  
while I contemplate with great love  
and tender pity Your five wounds,  
pondering over them within me,  
calling to mind the words which David,  
Your prophet, said of You, my good Jesus:  
"They have pierced my hands and my feet;  
they have numbered all my bones." (Psalm 22:17-18)