

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord (A)
(Isaiah 50:4-7 / Matthew 26:14 – 27:66)
09.04.2017

Dear brothers and sisters,

When we read the Passion's narrative, or when we listen to it, we cannot but be surprised by the fact that Jesus is walking towards his death **alone**. Jesus, who lived his whole life telling every person he met that they are infinitely loved by God, is **alone** when he signs his testimony with his blood.

When Jesus goes to Gethsemane to pray so that he may receive the strength he needs to do His Father's will, he takes Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with Him; He asks them to accompany him by their prayer and their fraternal support. When they should be praying in communion with him, three times he comes to find them asleep. Jesus is **alone**.

Another example of Christ left alone comes with Peter, the first of the apostles who had protested that he would never lose faith in Jesus, that he would never disown Jesus. And yet this same Peter, sitting outside in the courtyard of the High Priest, denies three times ever having known Jesus. Here too, Jesus is left feeling **alone**.

Jesus is so lonely that at the end he feels that he has been abandoned even by his heavenly Father: "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" Jesus dies **alone**.

We were created in the image and likeness of God. God is relationship: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If we live in relationship with one another, we bear witness to the living God, we are a reflection of God. In other words we are alive. If we live withdrawn, alienated, cut-off within ourselves, not only do we crucify Christ, but we are dead. One spiritual author has written that the most painful thing for Jesus during his passion were not the horrendous physical sufferings, but the psychological pain caused by being abandoned by all those for whom he had given his life. The most painful thing for Jesus during his Passion was his loneliness, the feeling of being rejected, misunderstood, betrayed... totally abandoned.

Today and during the Holy Week, will we leave Jesus **alone**, will we abandon Him? Or will we accompany him in prayer and with a compassionate heart? Will we take time to reflect on the meaning of his death for our salvation?

In our daily lives, are we faithful to our neighbour in whom the Lord is present? Or do we so easily pass beside our neighbours without paying attention to them, and consequently without paying attention to the Lord present within them?

Do we live in relationship with one another or isolated? Do we condemn others to feel abandoned, forgotten and isolated because we don't pay attention to them... because we are too busy or wrapped up with ourselves?

Loneliness is the great evil of our time. So many people go through life lonely. What would Jesus' attitude be towards them? What is our attitude towards them? Are we not often like those who betrayed Jesus, leaving Him **alone**? The point of that last question is not to make us feel guilty but to open the eyes of our hearts, to awaken our hearts... to make us ready to reach out to and draw alongside those who long for our presence by their side.