

Dear Friends,

Hanging in the rectory is an artist's rendition of Christ's crown of thorns with these words in the center of the crown: "There are some defeats more triumphant than victories." As we commemorate Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem today and recall his passion, death and resurrection these words strike at the heart of what we profess as Christians. Today, this Holy Week, Thursday's Last Supper, Friday's crucifixion, Saturday's silence and Sunday's celebration of the Resurrection are all part of a bitter-sweet period. There is joy, loss, suffering and finally jubilation throughout these days, all of which is summed up in one word shouted by the crowds as Jesus made his entrance into Jerusalem on a donkey, "Hosanna."

The word "Hosanna" is more than an exclamation of praise. It means, "Save now!" It is part of this week because it speaks of a conviction that Jesus indeed will save, save by his cross and resurrection, bringing freedom and new hope.

Seldom does everything in our lives work out as we expect. In the early Church the Christians expected Jesus would return soon. Twenty-one centuries later we are still waiting for his return in glory. Yet Jesus has come in many ways at different times. He came as an infant at Christmas, as a deliverer on Palm Sunday, as hope and new life on Easter morning; and he comes anew in our own lives whenever we realize it is he who saves us. Typically this realization follows our own period of pain and suffering, our own passions.

All of these occasions are times of celebration, times to sing out "Hosanna to the Son of David." These celebrations may not mean that all in our lives is now complete or perfect, but they do mark mileposts along our way when we have realized that "some defeats are more triumphant than victories." As we celebrate Palm Sunday and the Lord's Passion today, as we enter this holiest week of our Church's year, may we celebrate these saving events with expectancy and anticipation, recognizing that Jesus comes into our lives to make a difference; recognizing that he comes into our lives to save us, and we are all the better because of it. O Cross of Christ, save us!

Peace and blessings,

Father John