

## **Homily Palm Sunday (A) SFC - 2008**

My sisters and brothers in Christ:

Today, Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, the beginning of Holy Week, opens with Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem, a celebration we mirror with our own palms and the solemn entrance by the celebrant into the church.

We participate and we reflect upon that happy day, and yet all too soon we will participate in the Passion of Our Lord. In a sense, it is a day of joy and at the same time of sorrow as we enter into the mystery of the Passion and Death of Christ.

Al empezar la Semana Santa hemos de reflexionar en el significado de los últimos días de Jesús en la tierra; el clímax del año litúrgico, la cumbre más alta de la historia de la salvación, cuando está por cumplirse todo lo que había sido predicho y prometido.

This year the Gospel reading, the Passion of Christ, is taken from St. Matthew's Gospel which is known as the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ and the Divinity of Jesus. Two aspects that are present in today's celebration.

Pope Benedict XVI said last year, "The procession is first and foremost a joyful witness that we bear to Jesus Christ ... is also a procession of Christ the King: we profess the Kingship of Jesus Christ, we recognize Jesus as the Son of David, the true Solomon, the King of peace and justice. Recognizing him as King means accepting him as the One who shows us the way, in whom we trust and whom we follow. It means accepting his Word day after day as a valid criterion for our life. It means seeing in him the authority to which we submit. We submit to him because his authority is the authority of the truth" (Pope Benedict XVI, 2007).

We live in a time that it is important to be aware of our responsibility to actively participate in the building of the Kingdom of God on earth. The Church is the kingdom of God begun here on earth, the family of God built on the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets (Cf. Eph. 2,20).

It is important because more and more, in order to participate in our society, we are required to forget our faith, to 'privatize it' and to act as if God does not exist or is not important.

To be a Catholic, follower of Jesus Christ, is to accept Him as our only way, our only truth, and our only life. If we are Catholic, then our faith in Jesus Christ and his Church should animate everything we do –our thoughts, our actions, our work, every decision we make.

Estamos llamados a construir el Reino de Cristo en la tierra con nuestra vida y nuestro ejemplo. La nueva evangelización exige de nosotros que conozcamos y vivamos nuestra fe en la vida diaria de manera que los demás reconozcan a Cristo en nosotros.

One of the most striking things in today's celebration is the contrast between "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest" and a few days later "Crucify him!, Crucify him!"

"What a contrast between the green branches and the cross, between the flowers and the thorns!" It is especially interesting because "There are some striking contrasts in the depths of our hearts, for we are capable of the very greatest things and also the very worst"

So, today let's ask for the grace to be always faithful to our Christian vocation, never forgetting that our commitment is to Jesus, who is Perfect God and perfect man. Not just a prophet or a visionary or a leader. He is the Son of God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who came to earth to redeem us of our sins.

El Evangelio de San Mateo “afirma e insiste en que Jesús, el Cristo, es el Hijo de Dios. Son numerosos los pasajes que mencionan las relaciones entre el Padre y el Hijo: Jesus es el Hijo del Padre, el Padre es Dios y el Hijo es igual que el Padre” (NB, St. Matthew Gospel, p. 23).

As we just read, the High Priest said to Jesus: “I order you to tell us under oath before the living God whether you are the Christ, the Son of God’. Jesus said in reply, ‘You have said so. But I tell you: From now on you will see ‘the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven’”

Today we ask for the grace to renew our commitment to follow Jesus Christ as Pope Benedict XVI said last year: “The exhortation (*to joy*) with which our Liturgy today begins ... correctly *understand* the procession (*of the palms*) as a symbolic representation of what we call the "following of Christ": ...The expression "following of Christ" is a description of the whole of Christian existence” (Benedict XVI, 2007).

Empezamos una semana especial en la Liturgia de la Iglesia: la Semana Mayor. Pedimos que sea una semana de gracia para cada uno de nosotros. Unos días para contemplar el amor de Dios por nosotros y para renovar nuestro compromiso de fe.

This year, once again, we are called to renew our hope of salvation and eternal life that the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus bring to our world; especially reflecting on the building of The Kingdom of God on earth and the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

We ask Mary, our Blessed Mother, with the words of Pope Benedict XVI: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, our Mother, teach us to believe, to hope, to love with you. Show us the way to his Kingdom! Star of the Sea, shine upon us and guide us on our way!” (Spe salvi, 50). Amen.