



Archdiocese of San Antonio

Most Reverend Gustavo García-Siller



Homily – Palm Sunday

March 20, 2016

Today, we join Jesus on a pilgrimage, recalling his arrival at the holy city of Jerusalem. We do not have to leave this holy cathedral to accompany the Lord. Jesus continues to walk the paths of our hearts. We are invited to be fellow pilgrims, hearing the gospel story again, walking with Jesus where he still walks – within our hearts.

After our entry into the holy city, we join Jesus and his disciples at a Passover meal. Sadly, one of them will betray him. Another will deny knowing him. The others will abandon him. Our pilgrimage reminds us that it is not enough to sit at table with the Lord and listen to his words. We also have to be ever faithful to him and his gospel.

We follow Jesus to the Mount of Olives. We need to pray where he is praying today – in the hearts of the poor. We need to be more sensitive to the suffering and oppression of others. We need to welcome “outsiders” into our community rather than resort to swords or barriers to “protect” ourselves from them. Jesus can heal

those who suffer violence just as he heals the servant's damaged ear. Jesus opens doors and builds bridges of encounter, dialogue, and inclusion – even friendship between Herod and Pilate!

Our pilgrimage takes us to the courtyard where Peter warms himself by a fire. While we, too, have been warmed by the fire of Jesus' words and actions, we may at times act as if we were not believers. Just as Jesus' gaze falls upon Peter after his denials, his gaze falls upon us – inviting us to repent and return to his way.

We move next to where Jesus' trial takes place. We are reminded that justice is the only way to peace -- that all our rights are protected only if the rights of the weakest and most vulnerable are defended. We need to reform our criminal justice system, including our use of the death penalty, to ensure justice, harmony, and peace.

Our pilgrimage takes us to the foot of the cross. Here words fail us, for Jesus' agonizing death vividly shows God's mysterious, overwhelming love for us. Our journey reminds us that Jesus reaches out in mercy to every suffering human heart. Experiencing God's mercy, we are called to be merciful like our heavenly Father.

Our pilgrimage this week can help us proclaim the Lord Jesus and his gospel more effectively – in word and deed. But first, we

have to experience conversion of heart and mind and attitude. Only then can we proclaim truly and boldly: *Viva Cristo Rey!*