



I too..would have..

Every year, the solemn Liturgy of Palm Sunday once again offers us a reading of the Passion of Jesus: a moving account that should be well-pondered, allowing it to enrich our life. Permit me to offer a reflection that springs from my heart as I reread Luke's account. My reflection takes as its starting point the perspective of the apostles because, after all, we are very similar to them.

The scene opens in the intimacy of a room prepared for the paschal meal. Jesus is with his apostles, his traveling companions, whom he called one by one, choosing them for something very great. Jesus speaks, breaks the bread and passes around a cup of wine. His apostles find it hard to understand what he is doing. Still overwhelmed by the euphoria they had experienced a few days earlier when they had entered Jerusalem and the people had hailed Jesus as the Son of David and the new king of Israel, that evening, unaware of what was about to happen, they discussed among themselves which one of them was the greatest and most important in their group.

Like the apostles, I too would have vigorously participated in the debate about who was the greatest. I too would have challenged the world for the sake of Jesus. I too would have sworn my loyalty to him. I too would have been ready to give my life for him.

Instead, like them, I too would have fallen asleep instead of keeping watch in prayer. I too would have pulled out my sword to defend myself. I too would have been afraid of those who pointed at me and called me a friend of Jesus. I too would have denied him, run away and hidden. I too would have wept for my fears and cowardice.

But I too would have continued to follow the Master from afar. I too would have wanted to meet his gaze—the same gaze he turned on Peter after he had denied him—and would have felt my smallness, weakness and poverty. I too would have wanted to weep like the fisherman from Galilee, who on the way to Golgotha sought an opportunity to say: "Forgive me! I warned you not to count on me or trust me!" I too would have wanted to be as ready as the Cyrenian to help my Master carry his cross.

And at the foot of that cross...I too would have been enveloped in that strange darkness and would have felt lost, alone and crushed by boulders of remorse.... Darkness! Night! First internally and then externally. But the last words of Jesus hearten me too, making me feel the ardor of his love, the possibility of redemption and the beauty of a light that shines beyond my limitations: "Father, forgive them, because they don't know what they are doing."

Palm Sunday 2019

Is. 50:4-7

Ps. 22

Phil. 2:6-11

Lk. 22:14–23:56

PSALM 22:24b, 26

***You heard me
when I cried out
to you!
I will praise you
in the vast assembly!***



Fr. Giovanni Di Vito