

Passion/Palm Sunday

Homily: Fr. Shijo George

Pastor – Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Victoria, BC, Canada

On Palm Sunday, we commemorate the day on which the poor and common people considered Jesus as their King, and the Messiah who will save them from all their troubles and miseries. They saw a new light in Jesus that would lead them out of their darkness and their unanswered dilemmas of life, causing them to all cry out: “Hosanna! Grant us salvation, save us!”

The Hebrew root words for “Hosanna” are “Hoshiya” and “Na.” “Hoshiya” comes from the verb “yasha” that means “to save” or “to deliver”. The word “Na” means “please” or “I beseech you.” Together, “Hoshiya Na” means “Please save us now.” It is a cry for help directed towards God, and a declaration for the need for deliverance. As they believed Jesus to be their leader, with the power to lead them to freedom from their physical bondage, it was a call to the Lord’s leadership.

“Hoshiya Na” is part of the Jews’ prayer. We see this in the Psalms: “Save us, we beseech you, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success” (Psalm 118:25). In another Psalm, we read: “The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, so I shall be saved from my enemies” (Psalms 18: 2-3).

As we have our spiritual journey on this earth, let us also plead to God: “Hosanna.” We may need to shout “Hosanna” to save ourselves from the spiritual threats that we face in our lives such as stress and tension, depression, hatred, and the daily problems that we face in our lives. We shall pray “Hosanna” for people who lose their faith. We supplicate with a “Hosanna” when we see the moral degradation around us. In all difficult situations, let us pray to Jesus: “Hosanna.” Let us ask the Lord to lead our way through life. When we feel darkness in our hearts, we should pray “Hosanna” and plead: “Lead us kindly, O Lord!”

One day a teacher asked the disciple: "In what light do you live during the day?" The disciple replied: "In the light of the sun." The teacher's next question was: "In what light do you live when the sun sets?" The disciple's answer was: "In the light of the moon." The teacher asked again: "If the sun sets, and the moon disappears on a black moon day, in what light will you live then?" The disciple's thoughtful answer was: "By the light of a lamp." "If the sun sets, the moon stops shining on the new moon day, and the flame in the lamp is extinguished by the wind, in what light will you live?" the teacher asked finally. The disciple thought about it for a moment but could not find an answer. Then after meditating, the teacher said:



"When the sun sets, the moon disappears, and the lamp goes out, the soul will be your light."

Let us ask God to be our light to light our way.

And as we trust and believe that the Lord is always close to the broken-hearted, let us raise our voices to pray: "Hosanna! Hoshiya Na! Save me, God! We need you!"