

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



A few years ago, I threw my back out. While bending down to pick something up, I was suddenly crippled in agony. Turns out this is a common thing in middle aged men! The cause, I discovered, was a lack of core strength – something we hear a lot about today. The solution? Gyms invite us to take out a membership, or we can join spinning classes, or sign up for Cross Fit, all in the name of building core strength. But these things are only a temporary fix.

Today's liturgy offers us the real answer. The palms which we receive on Palm Sunday are single leaves from a palm branch, which looks like a spinal column; it is a symbol of Faith. Our standing upright, our core strength, comes not from the Gym, or Cross Fit, or bodily exercise, but from the faith which we profess in Jesus Christ, Crucified and Risen. Without faith we are crippled!

Holy Week strengthens our faith; allowing us to stand upright. Holding our palms aloft, we sing 'Hosanna' – which means 'Blessed be God!' This acclamation of blessing is found on the lips of all who are witnesses to God's action in their lives. We are witnesses that God is the one who has stooped down to fallen humanity; He bent down to us. Descending from Heaven to Earth, he abased himself to become a servant, he was lowered into the tomb, and descended into Hell. But He now stands upright, Risen, interceding for us at the right hand of the Father.

The love of God is the only thing that can vanquish death itself, and consequently the only thing which is able to forgive the transgressor. It is the only thing which can allow the crippled to stand upright!

The Gospel can be summarized in two phrases: 'Love your enemies' and 'I am coming soon.' Christ Jesus has made an appointment with each of us this Holy Week. He has loved us when we were his enemies, and he has promised to come to us this week. May today's celebration lead us to truly experience the Paschal Mystery, that we who are crippled may stand upright. Just as we have partaken in his death, we also may become witnesses and bearers of his Resurrection.

Fr. Sean