

## 2020 PALM SUNDAY

It was the atheistic cosmologist, Stephen Hawkin, who once said, “We are all chemical scum on an average-sized planet orbiting around a very average-sized star, in the outer suburb of one of a million galaxies.”

If that was all there was to human existence we would have every reason to be very depressed, very depressed indeed.

But from the very beginning of time, we, human persons, have sensed that we are far more than just a random collection of chemicals. Our hearts cry out for there to be an ultimate meaning for our living. And deep within us we hunger for surety that when life on Earth ends, we will enjoy final fulfilment within a union with the Divine Being –the Creator of all life.

As Christians we believe that we have been created by God for a purpose. And we know, too, that to be fulfilled, we must open ourselves up to that purpose and with grateful hearts embrace the gift of life God has given us. Part of the adventure of living is becoming the full human person we were created by God to become.

Sadly, though, so many of us lead intensely distracted lives. We never give the fundamental questions of life and death a thought. Our brains are like monkey cages- so much squealing and chatter, so much distraction and playing games, that we never settle and ponder the fundamentals of living.

That is why the present lockdown- sad as it is- is an opportunity for us to perhaps get our lives back into perspective.

I was captivated by a poem written during the last week by a woman from the US. Her name is Kitty O’Meara. It goes like this:

“And the people stayed at home  
And read books  
and listened  
and rested  
and exercised  
and made art.  
And played games,  
and learned new ways of being,  
and were still.  
And listened more deeply.

Some meditated,  
some prayed,  
some danced  
Some met their shadows.

And the people began to think differently.  
And the people healed.

And, in the absence of people living in ignorant,  
dangerous,  
mindless,  
and heartless ways,  
the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed,  
and the people joined together again,  
they grieved their losses,  
and made new choices,  
and dreamed new images,  
and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully,  
as they had been healed.

As we sit at home we have an opportunity to listen to the voice of the Lord more intently. Yes it may mean meeting our shadows, which could be a bit scary, but if we place ourselves utterly into the Lord's care- especially during the coming Holy Week, who knows what healing will occur within our hearts!

Today in our Gospel from St. Matthew's Passion account we reflect how Jesus, a man of wondrous good and wisdom, was made to suffer horrendous pain and died a cruel death on a Cross. What happened was utterly shameful. But it was also glorious.

We focus upon Jesus, Who had ridden through the streets of Jerusalem to the happy cries of branch-waving, Hosanna-shouting citizens. But now, a week later, was being led through the same streets to his crucifixion on Calvary. He had been betrayed by a person with whom He had just shared the Passover

Meal. He had been denied by His closest friend and left to fend for Himself by most of His followers. He had been brutally beaten and crowned on the head with spiky thorns and now was about to be fixed to the wood of the cross with jagged nails searing through the tender nerves in His hands and feet.

We listen to this familiar story and once again are drawn to wonder why Jesus- the Son of God- allowed this to happen. What compelled Jesus to become the Lamb of Sacrifice?

At the Last Supper Jesus had consciously offered to the Father the gift of His Body and Blood- poured out for the salvation of all mankind. It was a supreme example of loving obedience, forever wiping away the disharmony created by humanity's constant and ongoing rebellion against God.

During this coming week I am sure that all of us, because of the restrictions placed upon us, will have time to deeply ponder the wonderful Holy Week Readings and to reflect upon the love which burst forth from the Heart of Jesus on Calvary both for His Father and for each one of us.

In the quietness of our homes, this will be a Holy Week like no other Holy Week. Let us all enter into it as best we can. May it be a time when we confront our shadows, place them at the foot of the Cross and allow the Blood of Christ to bring for all of us a wonderful healing.

Be assured of my prayers for all of you.

Mons Frank.