

HOLY WEEK AS THE ANTIDOTE TO INSANITY

March 22, 2015

Dear Parishioners,

Next Sunday marks the annual commencement of Holy Week. In erstwhile Catholic cultures the entire society gave itself over to the observance of these sublime religious mysteries: the Lord's final entrance into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday); the Institution of the Priesthood and the Eucharist (Holy Thursday), the Death of the Lord (Good Friday) and His glorious Resurrection (Easter Sunday).

How many more are left to us, either as individuals or in history? That is an intriguing question. Certainly our own individual windows of opportunity to observe Holy Week are narrowing, some more quickly than others. When those windows are at last shut tight we will be thrust definitively into the Mysteries of God which we attempt to comprehend in our sacred rites while on this Earth.

This phenomenon of the mysterious & mystical is an essential component of human existence. It is inescapable – no matter how hard we try to reduce man and the world to molecules and energy. And it is an absurdly impoverished worldview that pretends we can measure all of reality with microscopes and scales (some even try to detect ghosts with specialized energy meters). The fallacy of empiricism is evident in its assertion that “the only certain knowledge is that gained from observation and measurement,” because this very principle is not itself observable or measurable but is rather philosophical.

Death certainly helps to correct all these mental bugs. Perhaps modern man is afraid to think or speak too much of it. Certainly he is at a disadvantage to do so if his only tools are the dead-end pseudo-religions that inevitably emerge whenever True Religion declines. He is also hamstrung by the bizarre introspections of modern philosophy, with its various denials of external reality, meaning, man, truth, being, etc. The poster boy of nihilism, Friedrich Nietzsche, insolently claimed that “God is dead.” He went on to die a madman. In fact, he lived as a madman, since to deny reality is mad. And what is more real than God?

Then there is Holy Week, with its inexorable assertions year after year that astound and tantalize mankind: There was a man named Jesus of Nazareth Who claimed Divinity and backed up His wisdom with mighty deeds. He was acclaimed at first but then vilified by the people. The night before He died He instituted a mystical rite and a mystical priesthood to fulfill it. He was subjected to betrayal, a mock trial, and torture. He died on the ignominious gibbet of a Roman cross and the curtain of the Temple was torn in two. He entered the jaws of death and emerged the glorious Victor three days later.

These are mysterious assertions indeed. But they have captivated the mind of mankind for two millennia. Even more – they have resonated in the human heart, restored hope and redeemed a fallen race.

Holy Week is upon us. May its timeless message sweep us away.

*Father de Rosa
Pastor*