

Bishop's Reflection - Palm Sunday

Have you ever said to yourself, "You've got to be nuts to apply for this job?" If you have ever said "yes", then you can relate to the qualifications of the Suffering Servant in today's First Reading. "One" who has "The tongue of a teacher", "Sustains the weary with a word", wakens to receive new instructions each day, follows through with them without fail, is treated with insults, injury and spitting without any complaint, has a face set like flint, undeterred by anything. It is the job description of Jesus. Today, we contemplate his trials and tribulations, and marvel at the strength and endurance that he showed.

But have you ever understood it as a job description for your life as a Christian...to be another Christ? Not because the world needs to be saved again, nor because we are trying to save ourselves or could possibly hope to do so, but because the world needs to see credible witnesses to the saving ministry of Christ in our world.

Let me suggest that we begin each day by focusing on the one true suffering servant. By reflecting on his patient endurance, and ability to absorb the many blows and injuries he endured, let us draw strength and hope. Though we could never match him stride for stride, nor even hope to endure a small fraction of all that he was asked carry, the graces found in drawing near to him are not without their own merit. In a world where insult is returned by insult and strife is countered by strife, let us be willing to absorb some of it, so that sin may not continue unabated indefinitely.

Just as Christ acts as a type of carbon sink, filtering out the effects of sin and replacing them with grace, we too are called absorb the insults and blows we suffer, due to sin, and by his grace, be made instruments of healing, reconciliation and forgiveness. Reflecting on the Song of the Suffering Servant, today, may we see ourselves as witnesses to God's wonderful work in Christ by extending forgiveness to those who have hurt us in any way.