

Humility Triumphs

By: Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio, PH.D

When a conquering hero of the ancient world rode into town in triumph, it was in a regal chariot or on the back of a stately stallion. Legions of soldiers accompanied him in the victory procession. Triumphal arches, festooned with relief sculptures, were often erected to immortalize his valiant victory.

After driving out demons, healing the sick, and raising the dead, it was time for the King of Kings to enter the Holy City. But to do so, he rode not on the back of a warhorse, but a donkey. His companions accompanied him brandishing not swords, but palm branches. The monument to his victory, erected a week later, was not an arch, but a crucifix.

His earthly beginning was frightfully humble. And his earthly end would be no different. The wood of the manger prefigured the wood of the cross.

From beginning to end, the details are humiliating. No room in the inn. Born amidst the stench of a stable. Hunted by Herod's henchmen. Growing up in a far-flung province of the Roman Empire—Galilee, the land where the country accent is so thick, you can cut it with a knife. How was it that the high priest's servant-girl knew that Peter was a disciple of Jesus? His hillbilly accent gave him away (Mat 26:73). Jesus disciples were not cultured, learned men of ability. They were drawn from the low-life of a backwater region.

When one of his closest companions offered to

betray him, he did not require millions. Jesus' worth was reckoned to be no more than the Old Testament "book value" for a slave—thirty pieces of silver (Ex 21:32). When he was finally handed over to the Romans, he was not given the punishment meted out to Roman citizens. Beheading was the quick, dignified way to execute someone of any standing. Instead Jesus was given punishments reserved only for slaves and rebellious members of subjugated peoples — flagellation and crucifixion. These two penalties were not just about the pain, but about the humiliation. In first century Palestine, men and women typically covered themselves from head to toe, even in the scorching heat. A crucified man was stripped naked and put on display for all to see.

But this is not primary a story of violence and humiliation. The events of Holy Week are much more about love and humility.

That's why on Passion Sunday we read the powerful words of Paul's letter from the Philippians (2:6-11). Though the Divine Word was God, dwelling in the serene heights of heavenly glory, he freely plunged to the depths of human misery, joining himself to our frail nature, entering into our turbulent world. As if this act of humility were not enough, he further humbled himself, accepting the status of a slave. His act of stooping down to wash the feet of his disciples (Jn 13) was a parable of his whole human existence, for this act was regarded as so undignified that not even Israelite slaves could be compelled to do it.

But that's just it. Jesus was not compelled to do it. He willingly lowered himself in his birth, in his ministry, in his death. No one took his life from him. He freely laid down his own life (Jn 10:18). Others did not have the chance to humble him; he humbled himself.

It had to be so. The Second Adam had to undo the damage caused by the first. What was the sin our first parents? They disobeyed because they wanted to know what God knew, to be like God, to exalt themselves over God (Gen 3). They were bitten by the Serpent, and injected with the deadly venom of Pride. The antidote, the anti-venom could only be humility. The foot-washing, donkey-riding New Adam would crush the head of the deadly serpent by means of loving, humble obedience.

The first-born of many brothers lowered himself to the dust from which the First Adam has been made—indeed humility comes from the word "humus." But God responded to his humility by exalting him far above Caesars, kings, and even Hollywood stars. And he invites us to share his glory with him. But first we must walk on his road to glory, the royal road of the cross.

Taken from:

<http://www.integratedcatholiclife.org/2014/04/dambrosio-sunday-reflection-humility-triumphs/>

From an ancient homily on Holy Saturday

(2nd Reading for the Office of Readings of Holy Saturday)

Something strange is happening—there is a great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness. The whole earth keeps silence

because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. God has died in the flesh and hell trembles with fear.

He has gone to search for our first parent, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow the captives Adam and Eve, he who is both God and the son of Eve. The Lord approached them bearing the cross, the weapon that had won him the victory. At the sight of him Adam, the first man he had created, struck his breast in terror and cried out to everyone: "My Lord be with you all." Christ answered him: "And with your spirit." He took him by the hand and raised him up, saying: "Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

I am your God, who for your sake have become your son. Out of love for you and for your descendants I now by my own authority command all who are held in bondage to come forth, all who are in darkness to be enlightened, all who are sleeping to arise. I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be held a prisoner in hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead. Rise up, work of my hands, you who were created in my image. Rise, let us leave this place, for you are in me and I am in you; together we form only one person and we cannot be separated.

For your sake I, your God, became your son; I, the Lord, took the form of a slave; I, whose home is above the heavens, descended to the earth and beneath the earth. For

your sake, for the sake of man, I became like a man without help, free among the dead. For the sake of you, who left a garden, I was betrayed to the Jews in a garden, and I was crucified in a garden.

See on my face the spittle I received in order to restore to you the life I once breathed into you. See there the marks of the blows I received in order to refashion your warped nature in my image. On my back see the marks of the scourging I endured to remove the burden of sin that weighs upon your back. See my hands, nailed firmly to a tree, for you who once wickedly stretched out your hand to a tree.

I slept on the cross and a sword pierced my side for you who slept in paradise and brought forth Eve from your side. My side has healed the pain in yours. My sleep will rouse you from your sleep in hell. The sword that pierced me has sheathed the sword that was turned against you.

Rise, let us leave this place. The enemy led you out of the earthly paradise. I will not restore you to that paradise, but I will enthrone you in heaven. I forbade you the tree that was only a symbol of life, but see, I who am life itself am now one with you. I appointed cherubim to guard you as slaves are guarded, but now I make them worship you as God. The throne formed by cherubim awaits you, its bearers swift and eager. The bridal chamber is adorned, the banquet is ready, the eternal dwelling places are prepared, the treasure houses of all good things lie open. The kingdom of heaven has been prepared for you from all eternity.

Liturgy of the Hours, Catholic Book Publishing Co., N.Y., 1976 .

Mass Intentions

Sunday April 9th

- 6:00 am For the deceased members of the Milam & Steely Families; requested by Stella Milam.
8:00 am For the repose of the soul of Antonio Muxtag
9:30 am For the repose of the souls of Sam & Josephine Covernale; requested by Bernard Covernale.
11:00 am For the people of the parish.
5:30 pm For the repose of the souls of John & Ethel Sullivan; requested by Mark Sullivan.

Monday April 10th

- 6:30 am For the special intentions of the extended Michels, Kiibbler & Uschak Families.
12:10 pm For the repose of the souls of Vincent Nguyen and Maria Phan; requested by Kevin Nguyen.

Tuesday April 11th

- 6:30 am For the repose of Silvestra Rodriguez; requested by Rosie Ortega.
12:10 pm For the repose of the souls of Dcn. David Adame; requested by Tina Adame.

Wednesday April 12th

- 6:30 am For the repose of the souls of Anne Purcell White requested by Mark Sullivan.
12:10 pm For the special intention of Rachael Yalcin; requested by the Yalcin family.

Thursday April 13th

- 7:00 pm Mass of the Lord's Supper

Friday April 14th

- 12:00 pm Beginning of Three Hour Devotions (Tre Ore)
3:00 pm Liturgy of the Lord's Passion

Saturday April 15th

- 8:30 pm Easter Vigil Mass

Easter Sunday April 16th

- 6:00 am For the deceased members of the Flores & Lopez Families; requested by Martha Cerda.
8:00 am For the repose of the soul of Robert Bagot; requested by a friend.
9:30 am For the special intention of Kay Volansky; requested by the Nick Volansky Family.
11:00 am For the people of the parish.

There will be no 5:30pm Sunday Mass and preceding Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on Easter Sunday.

Annunciation Catholic Church

Sunday, April 9, 2017

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Palm Sunday of
the Lord's Passion

1618 Texas Avenue • P. O. Box 214 • Houston, TX 77001 • 713-222-2289
Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

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Weekday Masses:

6:30 a.m. and 12:10 p.m., Mon.—Fri.
12:10 p.m. Tues. & Thurs.—Tridentine Mass

Weekend Mass:

8:00 a.m. Saturday—English Novus Ordo

Saturday Vigil and Sunday Masses:

5:30 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass—English Novus Ordo
6:00 a.m. Sunday—English Novus Ordo
8:00 a.m. Sunday—Tridentine Mass
9:30 a.m. Sunday—English Novus Ordo
11:00 a.m. Sunday—Latin Novus Ordo
5:30 p.m. Sunday—English Novus Ordo

Sacrament of Penance (Confessions): 15 minutes before Mass