

## LET OF MY FEAR AND FOLLOW JESUS

This coming Sunday is Palm Sunday, and the readings center on the Suffering, Death, Resurrection, and Glorification of our Lord Jesus Christ, which remind us of how great His love is for us. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus shows us how we can go through suffering with love to fulfill our Father's will. Jesus has done it and He calls each one of us to do the same, that is, to bravely speak the truth no matter what the cost so everyone will get to know Him. I find His invitation hard to accept because it means I have to let go of my fears and weaknesses, one of which is my fear of speaking in public.

I have a type C personality. I always want to be on the back-end. Since I was a small child, I always have Mom, Dad and Ate do stuff for me. To this day, I still try to make them speak for me if possible. I am so shy and always have reservations. I think because I fear that if I say or do something wrong, people will judge or criticize me. Most of the time, I care about what people say or think about me. Because of this, I am not able to do what the Lord wants me to do.

But Jesus, as a human person with weaknesses of His own, willingly gave all with complete and total surrender because of His love for us even though He has the power to turn things around! And I know in my heart I should do the same for Him if I truly love Him.

But how can I live the Paschal Mystery of Christ in my every day life with fear in my heart? I find it easy to praise Jesus and talk about Him when everyone around me is praising Him and talking about Him too. But when I am not here and I am somewhere where no one seems to care about Him and people say negative things about Him and my faith, I am so quick to put my beliefs aside. I always think about my self and the negative consequences of declaring my love for the Lord in public may cause. I know I am silently condemning Him by doing that. Sometimes, I ask myself this question: If I truly love Jesus, why do I express my love for him on conditions, only when it's convenient?

This coming Holy Week is a wonderful opportunity for me to reflect on the Passion and Death of Jesus more deeply and truly make a decision.

Will I continue to be like those, who acclaimed Jesus as King in Jerusalem only to crucify him for being so, turned their backs to Him when He was being judged and condemned, be like those followers of Jesus that when temptation comes, they forget about Him and condemn Him to death, be like Peter who denied Jesus because of fear of being persecuted, Judas who betrayed Jesus because of his love for money, Pontius Pilate, who condemned Jesus, an innocent man, because of his desire to be approved by many, or the crowd who called out for Barabbas?

When will I start to go out of my comfort zone, walk an extra mile for Jesus, and fearlessly stand for what I truly believe in? When will I ever challenge myself to grow in my faith, even when it seems that those near me don't seem to care?

I hope, with the help of God's grace. I will....soon.

*Lord Jesus, enable me to receive Your grace, the grace that streams from Your Passion, Death, and Resurrection, so like Mama Mary, St. John and St. Mary Magdalene, I can stand faithfully at the foot of Your cross and walk with You faithfully on the streets of Jerusalem. I desire to surrender everything to you, not just some, give everything freely, not just some, love and trust you always and live in Your presence, not just sometimes, for You deserve so much better. You, my Savior and King! I now open my heart, mind, and spirit to You, allowing Your grace to penetrate deeply into my heart, deeper than my feeling. Please make me into a true disciple, who is always faithful, always at the right hand, even when there is "darkness" all around me. I want to fight for You no matter what it takes, no matter what the cost. I know I can do it Lord because I know You will be my help and I know I shall not be put to shame. I pray that I will be able to do what you did for me and always think of you above anything else. Amen.*