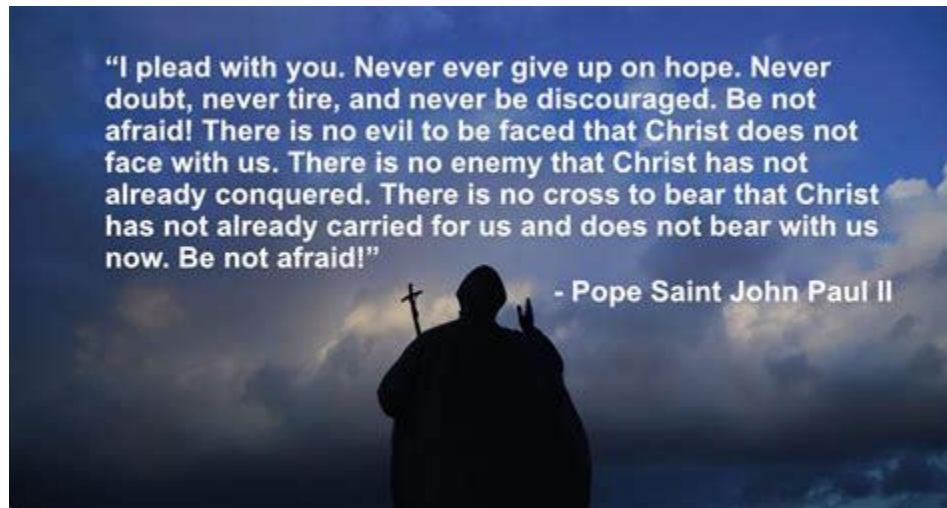


FROM FATHER JOHN: *"We are on pilgrimage with the Lord to the heights. We are striving for pure hearts and clean hands, we are seeking truth, we are seeking the face of God. Let us show the Lord that we desire to be righteous and let us ask him: Draw us upwards! Make us pure! Grant that the words which we sang in the processional psalm may also hold true for us; grant that we may be part of the generation which seeks God, "which seeks your face, O God of Jacob" (cf. Ps 24:6). Amen."* (Pope Benedict XVI, Sermon, Palm Sunday 2011)



Today is Palm Sunday. It is also the beginning of Holy Week, which has as its purpose the remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ's passion and death. It leads into the Easter Triduum which continues the remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ's passion and death but then culminates in the resurrection of our Lord which we celebrate on Easter Sunday. We begin this most Holy of Weeks by celebrating the Commemoration of our Lord Jesus' Messianic entrance into Jerusalem with the Blessing of the Palms and the Solemn Procession into the Church. We conclude with the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord. And, throughout Holy of Week, we enter deeply into the Mystery of our Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection.

The Easter Triduum is ultimately about what our Lord Jesus has done for us. It's about the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus. It's about salvation, it's about eternal life. Easter is about what we all long for, what humanity has longed for across the ages – immortality. We have received this great gift of immortality, this great promise of eternal life which comes to us through the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are two different sets of tombstones in Rome; those of the pagans and those of the Christians. The pagans' tombstones are inscribed with words like "farewell" and "nevermore" while the Christians' tombstones are inscribed with words like "Until we meet again." and "Alive in the Lord."

Jesus did something that had never been done before in the history of the world. He totally emptied himself of his own desires, his own needs and completely lived for the good of others. He lived for our good – your good and my good – to such a degree that he allowed himself to be sacrificed on the cross so that in His Resurrection you and I would also rise from the dead. That is what Holy Week is about – Our Lord Jesus giving us the gift of eternal life, the gift of salvation, the gift of immortality, the gift of our resurrection.

Let us keep in mind what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us and, in doing so, be inspired to respond to the gift that our Lord bestows on us. ***"Someone must acknowledge Christ's royalty. The question for me to answer today, as I receive and carry my palm, is: Am I going to be the one, or am I going to leave it to others? It is my king riding there, riding on to die for me!"*** (Mother St. Paul)

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.