

Message from the Rector

Dear People of God,

It was Palm Sunday, and 5-year-old Johnny was sick. He had to stay home from church with his older sister. Returning home from Mass, all members of the family were carrying palms. "What are these," Johnny asked. His mother replied, "People held them over Jesus' head as he walked by." Johnny replied, "Wouldn't you know it, the one Sunday I don't go, and He shows up!"

Even though we are unable to gather together at a church. We gather together as the church. You are the Church. You are the Body of Christ. With this in mind, our Holy Week begins this weekend (April 4-5) with Palm Sunday. The journey to the Cross with our Lord Jesus starts with COVID-19 beginning to rage in our own city and many parts of our country and world.

Feed peace over panic. Feed faith over fear. Feed wisdom over worry. Please take a deep breath and carefully pray these following words:

"Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you. All things pass. God does not change. Patience achieves everything. Whoever has God lacks nothing; God alone suffices."

~ St. Teresa of Avila

And as Pope Francis recently stated: "It is a time to decide to live differently, live better, love more and care for others."

I share with you this beautiful story. Read and pass it on.

Three Trees

Once upon a mountain top, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up. The first little tree looked up at the stars and said, "I want to hold treasure. I want to be covered with gold and filled with precious stones. I'll be the most beautiful treasure chest in the world!" The second little tree looked out at the small stream trickling by on its way to the ocean. "I want to be travelling mighty waters and carrying powerful kings. I'll be the strongest ship in the world!" The third little tree looked down into the valley below where busy men and women worked in a busy town. "I don't want to leave the mountain top at all. I want to grow so tall that when people stop to look at me, they'll raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I will be the tallest tree in the world!"

Years passed. The rain came, the sun shone, and the little trees grew tall. One day three woodcutters climbed the mountain. The first woodcutter looked at the first tree and said, "This

tree is beautiful. It is perfect for me.” With a swoop of his shining axe, the first tree fell. “Now I shall be made into a beautiful chest,” the first tree said. “I shall hold wonderful treasure!”

The second woodcutter looked at the second tree and said, “This tree is strong. It is perfect for me.” With a swoop of his shining axe, the second tree fell. “Now, I shall sail mighty waters!” thought the second tree. “I shall be a strong ship for mighty kings!”

The third tree felt her heart sink when the third woodcutter looked her way. She stood straight and tall and pointed bravely to heaven. But the woodcutter never even looked up. “Any kind of tree will do for me,” he muttered. With a swoop of his shining axe, the third tree fell.

The first tree rejoiced when the woodcutter brought her to a carpenter’s shop. But the carpenter fashioned the tree into a feed box for animals. The once beautiful tree was not covered with gold, nor with treasure. She was coated with dust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals.

The second tree smiled when the woodcutter took her to a shipyard, but no mighty sailing ship was made that day. Instead, the once strong tree was hammered and sawed into a simple fishing boat. She was too small and too weak to sail an ocean, over even a river. Instead, she was taken to a little lake.

The third tree was confused when the woodcutter cut her into strong beams and left her in a lumberyard. “What happened?” the once tall tree wondered. “All I ever wanted was to stay on the mountain top and point to God . . .”

Many, many days and nights passed. The three trees nearly forgot their dreams. But one night, golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her newborn baby in the feed box. “I wish I could make a cradle for him,” her husband, Joseph, whispered. The mother squeezed his hand and smiled as the starlight shone on the smooth sturdy wood. “This manger is beautiful,” Mary said. Suddenly the first tree knew he was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening a tired traveler and his friends crowded into the old fishing boat. The traveler fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake. Soon a thundering and thrashing storm arose. The little tree shuddered. She knew she did not have the strength to carry so many passengers safely through the wind and the rain. The tired man awakened. He stood up, stretched out his hand and said, “Peace.” The storm stopped as quickly as it had begun. Suddenly the second tree knew she was carrying the king of heaven and earth.

One Friday morning, the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the forgotten woodpile. She flinched as she was carried through an angry, jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a man’s hands to her. She felt ugly and harsh and cruel. But on that Sunday morning, when the sun rose and the earth trembled with joy beneath her, the third tree knew that God’s love had changed everything. It had made the third tree strong. And every time people

thought of the third tree, they would think of God. That was better than being the tallest tree in the world.

Remember – life is what happened while I was making other plans! Trust in God – and may our Holy Week transform our lives – and the world. We can make a profound difference with the grace and help of God. At the same time, this powerful poem certainly resonates with our lives as we battle this Coronavirus.

When this is over

*May we never again
take for granted
A handshake with a stranger
Full shelves at the store
Conversations with neighbors
A crowded theatre
Friday night out
The taste of communion
A routine checkup
The school rush each morning
Coffee with a friend
The stadium roaring
Each deep breath
A boring Tuesday
Life itself.*

When this ends,

*may we find
that we have become
more like the people
we wanted to be
we were called to be
we hoped to be
and may we stay
that way – better
for each other
because of the worst.*

~ anonymous

Feed peace over panic. Feed faith over fear. Feed wisdom over worry.

The Lord Jesus promises us two things. Our life has meaning. We are going to live forever
If you get a better offer take it!

Walking with you,

Fr. Greg

Humor from the Rector



“My stomach is flat. The L is just silent!”