



HOMILY

On the Second Sunday of Passiontide or Palm Sunday

*Improperium expectavit cor meum, et miseriam:
et sustinui qui simul mecum contristaretur, et non fuit:
consolántem me quæsivi, et non inveni:
et dederunt in escam meam fel, et in siti mea potaverunt me aceto.*

*My heart hath expected reproach and misery:
And I looked for one who would grieve together with me, but there was none:
And I searched for one who would comfort me, and I found none:
And they gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink.*

Ps 68:21-22

Israël es tu Rex, Davidis et inclyta proles. You are the King of Israel, the noble lineage of David. In these solemn words of the ancient hymn to Christ the King, we find the Holy Church identified with Israel, the People of God with the Chosen People. ***Plebs Hebræa tibi cum palmis obvia venit: cum prece, voto, hymnis, adsumus ecce tibi:*** the Hebrew people came to meet You with palms: behold we too stand before You with prayers, vows,

and songs.

It should arouse dismay that the Triumph of Christ, Who was welcomed into Jerusalem as the Son of David and greeted as He Who comes in the Name of the Lord, could have changed in just a few hours into the violent uproar of the crowd standing outside the Praetorium, into shouts and insults, into the torments of the Passion, and finally into the death of the King of the Jews on the wood of the Cross. A dismay that comes from the consideration of how changeable the crowd is in its propensity to allow itself to be manipulated by the Sanhedrin and by the elders of the people, in its ease in forgetting — as if it never happened — the tribute of honors, the olive and palm branches, and the garments spread out along the road for the passage of the Lord.

We do not know if among the *pueri Hebræorum* there were also those who later mocked the Savior as He was dying on the Cross. But we know that they were Jews, just as the High Priests, scribes, and temple guards were Jews, as well as those who cried out, “Crucify Him!” as Jesus stood before them scourged and crowned with thorns. And the Apostles who fled were Jews, just as Simon Peter who denied Christ three times was a Jew, the Pious Women who wept for Him were Jews, Simon of Cyrene was a Jew, and Joseph of Arimathea was a Jew.

But if part of the Jewish people, despite the Prophecies and God’s interventions under the Old Law, came to put the promised Messiah to death, we should ask ourselves if this betrayal could not be repeated in a part of the new Israel, the Church, when we see Catholic faithful and even members of the Hierarchy who, like the Pharisees and the leaders of the Sanhedrin in Christ’s time, still today cry out their *Crucifige* [“Crucify” — cf. John 19:15], or repeat *quia non novi hominem* (Mt 26:72).

The people. Not in the Latin sense of *populus* — a society that gives itself laws and observes them — but rather in the sense of *vulgus* — that is, a people without identity, who have no awareness of rights and duties, who are maneuverable, unaware of what their heritage and destiny is, *profanum*, insensible to the sacred.

If we look at what is happening in the Church, at the crisis that afflicts her, at the apostasy that corrupts the Hierarchy and the faithful, the events of Palm Sunday seem forgotten, while living right before our eyes we see the horrors of the Passion and the Crucifixion. The Church which in the past celebrated the triumphs of Christ and preached His Gospel today seems to have been eclipsed by the Sanhedrin which accuses the Son of God of blasphemy and by the High Priests who call for His death. The society which once was Christian now shouts out its “Take Him away; take Him away,” spits on the face of the Savior, mocks His tormentors, and calls for His cancellation. Today’s scribes and Pharisees seem determined

to place guards to watch over the sepulcher in which the Church lies, as if to avert her resurrection, which would expose them as liars. The very disciples of the Lord flee, hide, and deny ever having known Him in order not to be excluded and marginalized, in order not to appear to go against the stream, in order not to contradict the powerful. And, at the same time, many Pious Women, many Cyreneans, many Josephs of Arimathea, mocked and insulted, help the Church to carry her Cross, remain at her feet with the Virgin and Saint John, seeking a place in which to lay that Mystical Body, awaiting its resurrection.

Today’s betrayal is no less serious than what Our Lord had to suffer; the *passio Ecclesiae* is not less sorrowful than that of her Head; the desolation and discouragement of those who contemplate the *Domina Gentium* exposed to dishonor from her very own Ministers is no less harrowing than the suffering of the *Mater Dolorosa*. Because the hatred that moved the executioners then is the same hatred that moves today’s executioners, and the love of the good Jews who recognized the Messiah then is the same as the love of good Christians who see His agony still perpetuated today.

I freed you from slavery in Egypt, and you have repaid your Savior by crucifying Him, we sing in the *Reproaches*. I gave you the Mass, and you have replaced it with rite that dishonors Me and drives away the faithful. I gave you the Priesthood, and you profane it with heretical and fornicating ministers. I made you steadfast against your enemies, and you throw open the doors of the Citadel, run towards your enemies, and honor them while they prepare to destroy you. I taught you the truths of the Faith, and you adulterate them or keep silent about them in order to please the world. I showed you the royal road of Calvary, and you follow the path of perdition, of pleasures, and of perversion.

Popule meus, quid feci tibi? aut in quo contristavi te? responde mihi! *My people, what have I done to you? Or how have I offended you? Answer Me!* Are not these words applicable to so many Catholics, to so many Prelates, to so many souls to whom the Lord, as He did to the Hebrew people, has shown His ardent love thousands and thousands of times? Should we not tremble at the mere thought of being able to be accomplices in the betrayal of Christ and His Church, which perpetuates Christ’s unbloody Sacrifice on our altars? She who is the mistress and dispensatrix of His infinite merits until the end of the world? She who is the witness of His miracles, the preacheress of His Word, and the guardian of His Truth?

Let us meditate, dear friends, on where our immortal soul is placed in this ferocious battle that shakes the world even to its foundations. Whether we are among the scoundrels, torturing the most sacred flesh of the Redeemer, or if we instead make our hearts available to welcome that adorable Body. Whether we tear our garments at the proclamation of His Divinity, or instead bow down like the Centurion before the Savior Who dies for us. Whether

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we are among those who incite the mob against the Son of God, or are instead among those who bear witness to His Glorious Resurrection. Because this soul of ours, for which Our Lord has shed His Blood and given His Life, shall remain immortal, either in the eternal bliss of Paradise or in the eternal torment of Hell.

May the contemplation of the Passion of Christ and of His Mystical Body rouse us from our torpor, snatch us from the slavery of sin, and spur us on the heroism of holiness. Because the Blood poured out for us does not fall upon us as a condemnation but as a salutary font that confers Grace. And so may it be.

+ Carlo Maria Viganò, *Archbishop*

2 April 2023
Dominica II Passionis seu in Palmis