

## Why do I stay?

14<sup>th</sup> April 2019 (Palm Sunday in Lent, Year C)

Isaiah 50:4-7; Psalm 21(22):8-9,17-20,23-24; Philippians 2:6-11; Luke 22:14-23:56.

As a community of faith this week we re-live the most important moments in the life of Jesus Christ.

At Christmas we celebrate the moment when God becomes human like us, so that we could get to know, interact with and live the life of God. God becomes human so that humans could share in God's own life.

Jesus' life, standing for the truth, was not acceptable to the Jewish leaders who sought to eliminate him. Jesus understood that this had to happen. He could have chosen to soften his teaching or change his way of life, but he chose to stay the course!

In Gethsemane we see Jesus agonising over the passion and death ahead of him. He prays the Father that, if it were possible, he would not have to undergo this pain. Yet he chooses to stay and do the Father's will.

Crucified, he is challenged to set himself free and get down from the cross. Could he have done it? Most probably yes. He has called the dead back to life; could he have not come down from the cross? Yet he stays there till the end, and gives up the Spirit.

Why does he stay? Far from being a rhetorical question, this is a question in faith; a question you and I need to ask ourselves many times in our lives.

This year we celebrate Holy Week and Easter under a thick dark cloud. An earthquake has shaken the Body of Christ we belong to and now we can barely recognise the landscape. Many of us are grieving the loss of what we have known for so long. Others have chosen to pitch camp somewhere else. We are often challenged: why do you stay? Why do you still send your children to Catholic schools? Why do you still participate in the life of a faith community you no longer recognise?

Jesus stays because he believes in a loving Father who is always one with him. Even at his darkest hour, Jesus turns to his Father: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me! Jesus believes that death is not the final answer; new life in the resurrection is the answer!

For you and me, this year, as we celebrate Holy Week, we need to ask ourselves: 'Why do I stay?'

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