

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – APRIL 4, 2021

Dear Parishioners and Families,

Many pieces, slices of life, make up the eight days of Holy Week - - the days from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. Each person can focus and see themselves in each of these slices of life. At the same time, we are like the conductor of the symphony, always playing in our mind the entire piece. At the end of the symphony, there is a great expression of WOW.

The superb example of life's symphony is Beethoven's Pastoral Sixth Symphony. It has five movements, five slices of life. It plays for only forty minutes. For most of us, our symphony plays for years.

Allow me to look at the many slices of life in Holy Week. Each one is a remembered part of our life. On Palm Sunday there is that spontaneous celebration as Jesus mounts a beast of burden in a pastoral scene and rides in with the waving of palms to the City of God. We have all had such moments of exaltation.

There is then the family gathering, the second movement, of our symphony. In Beethoven it is the scene by the brook, life giving water. These are our family meals and there is peace. But some persons may be missing, a family with a tear, torn. A note of sorrow and perplexity as Judas departs the table in Holy week.

The apostles have gathered as we have gathered as family. The food is set in place. The family eats with a prayer in the joyful present. The third movement of many gathering together in Beethoven's symphony remembers those who have died. Our dear ones, but we are their continuance. They are still with us but invisible, yet alive.

Then comes the fourth movement of the Pastoral Symphony: the thunderstorm, people scurry for safety. Rain falls, thunder booms. You can hear the thunder in the instruments, the pounding rain, the frightening lightening. This is our life too. We hide.

These are the struggles of life. There is no escaping them, nor was there for Jesus. He has taken on the full consequences of each one of us and the whole human race. This even means possible death.

Then without pause in the symphony the storm moves on and we begin to sing and laugh again. In the 5th movement we come out of our hiding and we have a thankful feeling because the rains have washed us clean. The saving waters have brought us life. This is the Resurrection of Jesus.

I invite you all to listen to Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, the Pastoral Symphony, and see in this symphony your life in all its slices.

At the end of the symphony if you watch it with video, you will see the conductor with an expression of joy as the piece ends. There is a great big WOW upon his face and each of the players has that peaceful countenance with music well played. This is the music of life and if we have played it well, it ends with a joyful song and a big WOW. We have entered the City of God.

WOW: HAPPY EASTER!

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.
April 4, 2021