

Palm Sunday, Cycle C: March 28, 2010

"Father into your hands I commend my spirit."

There you have it. As we enter Holy Week, we are left with these last words of Jesus as recorded by St. Luke. Thirty some-odd years were coming to an end. This was it for the son of the carpenter from Nazareth, a boy who had probably helped his dad in his work, as he grew in wisdom and age. A boy who probably could not have foreseen the twists and turns, the ups and the downs that his life would take, a boy who grew to adulthood and embarked a sacred mission... a journey that led him to this place, Calvary, and a cross. How was this possible? He had done so much good... the healings, the preaching and the miracles. And now he was to suffer death at the hands of others.

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What could this possibly mean for us? What are the implications of these last words as recorded by Luke?

Have you ever noticed how many times we have exhibited a "Take Charge" mentality in our lives? If we want something done right, we'll do it ourselves. Do you know that some people are afraid to get on an airplane, because someone else is at the controls? It's so very hard for some of us to just let go and let others do for us, most especially God. Yet, Jesus is telling us and demonstrating to us how to do just that. He is not just placing himself into his Father's hands for his own sake... he's doing it for our benefit, because he has been in his Father's hands his entire life. He is saying this so that we might realize that this is what counts in the spiritual life... the surrendering, the handing over, and the pouring out of ourselves for others. Our life in God is what's truly lasting and eternal, because everything else will eventually pass away.

And so it is with life, especially the spiritual life. Once we learn and accept that we are not in charge, that our lives are not our own, and that God is in charge, everything changes. It's truly liberating. Once I let go and let God do his thing, I can

begin to grown into the beautiful and creative person that he created me to be. This is true freedom... knowledge that I don't have to do it all on my own, by my own efforts, through the sheer force of my own will. Why? Because, I have never been in control and never will be.

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Jesus lived his whole life that way and he calls us to do the very same. But, make no mistake about it, when we surrender completely to God it doesn't mean that our lives will be easy or without difficulty. It doesn't mean that at times it won't be painful, or disappointing, or full of sorrow, or suffering. No, it doesn't mean that at all! But, it does mean that ultimately nothing can hurt us... not the most difficult relationship, not the toughest illness or even death itself. That's God's promise; we need but to have faith.

And there's only one safe place to be... in God's hands. It is by letting go of the controls that we put ourselves in a position to be wrapped in the embrace of our heavenly Father. Jesus knew that, he lived it and believed it. But, the question is: do we?

Let us ask for the courage that is necessary to follow the example of Jesus. Knowing that the safest place to be is in the embrace of our Father and that He will never let us walk life's journey alone, even if at times we do try to pull free of his grasp.

Now, let us pray: Great and gracious God, we ask that you receive our prayers and supplications as we place them into your loving hands. We recall the death of your Son upon our behalf because of our sins. It was through his courage, love and obedience that he won for us the promise of eternal salvation. It is a debt that we can

never repay. Let us never think that we have somehow earned our heavenly reward through our own individual efforts and scheming. Rather, let us simply trust in your loving mercy and grace as we release ourselves into the unfathomable depths of your love in our act of faith. Heavenly Father, unite us with your Son on this the most special of days as we read of his offering of self for all humankind. An offering that will allow us at the end of our earthly pilgrimage, to rest in the peace of your embrace and see you for ever face-to-face. Amen.