

"If only I had known." How many times have I said that? "

If I had only known that you had so much to do, I wouldn't have asked you to do this or that.

I'm sorry. If only I had known, I wouldn't have done that, or said that.

If only I had known about your need, I would have helped out.

When we say it, our sentiment is genuine. When we hear it, we know it is sincere. We know how badly it feels to hurt some one with our words or actions precisely because it has happened to us so many times.

Our Lord knows how this feels as well.

As we processed in today we heard of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. He is hailed as King, and rightly so. The streets are filled with joy and the commotion is frenzied! The Jewish leaders plead with Our Lord to quiet the crowds. Jesus tells them "that the very stones would cry His praises, if He would silence the people" They were the religious leaders of their day. They should have known. Jesus had been trying to show himself to them, but they refused to see. It would seem that the crowd knew.

However, in our reading of the Passion, we hear of the same crowd, in a frenzy again, but this time to see this very same Jesus.....the author of life ...put to death.

We read of the soldiers and kings and governors and others of little or much power, beating and cursing and mocking the very one who was willing to go to the cross....for the ransom of their souls.

I have to wonder, in the next days, months or even years to follow the Day of Great Suffering that reunited God and Mankind, how many of those who treated Him so brutally cried out in shame and horror and sorrow the words, "If I had only known"!

It is in the telling and re-telling and re-calling and re-remembering of the Passion of our Lord that the Church re-minds us of who Jesus is and what

He suffered for the redemption of the world. We, of all the peoples of the world, we who proclaim the death and the resurrection of Jesus....we who stand here at the foot of Calvary and at the mouth of the empty tomb, each and every Mass we take part in.... should not say of this day, this event...this Precious Savior....

"If only I had known"

And yet we all do.

In our frail human condition, we do know but struggle to understand the depth of a love that would die for us. We do know, but have to work to believe that we were,we are... worth that much suffering. We **do know** Jesus but so often miss seeing Him and responding to Him in our friends, our neighbors and even in those closest to us.

And so we fail..we fall...we sin. But because of this Passion... the life, death and resurrection of Jesus that we begin to celebrate most intensely this week, we also know that we can come to the fountain of His Mercy, receive forgiveness, and be made whole again.

I encourage anyone who might have the need for this healing grace that is found in the Sacrament of Reconciliation to make arrangements to get that taken care of before Holy Saturday.

I also want to encourage each and every one of us to attend and participate in the Mass on Holy Thursday and the service on Good Friday where we will gather as Church to offer ourselves, through the sufferings of Christ, to the Father so that we can be most Joyful and share in the glorious celebration of His resurrection.