

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today is Palm Sunday, and this morning during prayer, I was thinking of you as I so often do.

Today, in the first gospel reading, we hear of Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. If the story had ended there, it would have been a "happy ending," or so it would seem. Yet, that triumph was short-lived. The second, much longer gospel reading tells of his suffering and death which led to the **true** happy ending, the **Resurrection**.

St. Francis was in awe of the love that Jesus showed for us through the Cross. His entire life and his (and our) spirituality revolve around the **Crib** and the **Cross**. Francis begged to experience the same suffering and love Christ had experienced; his prayer was answered with the gift of the Stigmata.

So, here we Secular Franciscans are today at the beginning of **Holy Week in this Year of Mercy**. Even as we remember the passion and death of Jesus, each one of us suffers in our own way. And, we know many others who suffer the indescribable pain of illness, loneliness, poverty, hunger and persecution. As Franciscans how do we make sense of this? What are we called to do?

The power of your **prayers and your actions** can bring the love of Christ to others. **Pray** each day that everyone will be touched by God's infinite mercy. **Reach out** to as many as you can with a smile, a hug or a good work, **especially** *those whom you find difficult to love*. You may never see the result of your efforts, but **you will have touched someone**. If every one of us touched **one other person**, the love offered up in Christ's passion and the light of his Resurrection would spread to all of us, and wouldn't THAT be a happy ending!

My prayer this week will be that you may experience the love of our Lord Jesus during Holy Week and Easter, and that you may help others to experience God's love and mercy. Please continue to pray for your Region Executive Council, we are praying for you!

Please remember that **Convivenza this year on April 23rd** is a **pilgrimage for the Year of Mercy**. Ministers should **RSVP to me by April 15th** with the number planning to attend. My letter and full details are at the link below.

http://ourladyoftheangelsregion.org/OLTAR_2016_Convivenza_complete.pdf

Peace and blessings,
Diane

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