

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Given the length of all our readings for Palm/Passion Sunday, I offer just a brief reflection. I've often said, Palm/Passion Sunday is the most schizophrenic of all of the holidays on the Church calendar. In one Sunday, we hear people at their best turn to people at their worst. We can imagine that out of some of the same mouths who proclaim, "Hosanna to the Son of David" and who wave palms towards Jesus him when he comes riding into Jerusalem – we can imagine that some of those people are the same ones who, after they're cajoled, swayed, or threatened by the Pharisees and Priests exclaim crucify him when asked by Pilate what he should do with Jesus who is called Messiah. People are fickle. We are sinners. We are bound to sin, and cannot free ourselves. "Hosanna," that word the crowd cries out to Jesus is Hebrew for "save us!" They know that they need saving. We know that we need saving.

Our current situation of quarantine from risking exposure to the rampant COVID-19 virus has our collective and individual anxiety heightened more than usual, of course. This, indeed, has been a unique and peculiar Lent. One I'm sure I will be looking back at years from now in much the same way I look back at the time after September 11th, 2001. This time has called our nation, indeed the world to a greater sense of responsibility for protecting our own health, and the health of our neighbors. Nurses, doctors, EMT and other first responders, who are often our unsung heroes are those who are definitely on the front lines. I received on my Facebook feed the story of one such nurse. I shared it because it touched me deeply. Her story is heartbreaking and very real:

[Devon Nicole Oechsle](#) is with [Jason Daniel Oechsle](#).

March 31 at 5:52 PM

This is my current situation.

Jason and I just had to have a very hard conversation to send Ellie away tonight for maybe a month... to stay with my amazing friend [Anita](#), who did not even hesitate to keep her for us. And Ellie loves "Miss Nita."

This is the face of someone who feels punished for trying to be the "good guy." My job as an ER nurse is just that, my job, I don't ever feel like it's anything crazy or special or deserving of accolades. Jason feels the same way as a firefighter/medic.

But, our jobs are important right now and unlike many, we are still required to work. And that work carries a high risk of being infected, or spreading this damn virus. I have already been in contact with +covid-19 patients, and the last thing we want to do is have Ellie surrounded by the potential virus we could carry home.

So, I feel punished for having to be the "good guy." I have to send my 3.5yo child away. I won't get to visit her. I won't get to hug her. I won't get to tuck her in at night. We have FaceTime, and that's it. For up to a month, or who knows how long...and many of my coworkers have had to do the same.

So, if you've read this far and you are having to stay home with your kids all day, consider it a blessing and absolutely NOTHING less.

And for heaven's sake, everyone, STAY.AT.HOME. The sooner this crud is over the quicker my kid can come home 🙏

Edit: since this has gone viral somehow, let me just set one thing straight. Don't you DARE come at me for "getting rid of my child" and saying "you made a choice, there were other options" and "no job is worth sending my kid to a stranger to raise"

1. Sure would be a crummy day for you if all the staff in your ER weren't there because they all quit their jobs to stay at home with their kids
2. Tell me what other options I had since you are so in my shoes?
3. She is 15min down the road, staying with someone she loves and who loves her. We didn't just wake up and decide to leave her with a stranger!

All the keyboard warriors can just 🙌 sit 🙌 down 🙌.

Devon Nicole Oechsle is brave and human. Many of us are frightened, but she has more reason to be frightened than a lot of us. Her job forces her to be in harms way on a regular basis. She is in a profession where she is duty bound to serve humanity.

As Jesus enters Jerusalem, humble and riding on a donkey, he receives accolades from the crowd. They call upon him to save them. Just like his humble entry is unexpected, so will be the means by which Jesus saves humanity. All throughout the Church year, we hear how Jesus binds himself to serve humanity. At Christmas, we celebrate how he binds himself in the incarnation, leaving His rightful throne to wrap our fragile flesh around himself and become one of us in order to rescue us. During Lent, we're reminded that He is a God who forgives. At this culmination of Lent, this Holy Week, we're reminded once again of the great depth to which Jesus stoops to save us from sin, death and the evil one. He leaves nothing to chance. He gives us every last ounce of his life, every last drop of his blood and his very last breath to save us. As Paul tells us in what is seen by many as one of the early church's first hymns really, "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross."

Yes – this is what he does. Out of love for you and me. May we all marvel at His great love, which is so vast and so fierce that it is almost frightening. And as we look at our current situation. Let us all rejoice that, just like sin, death, and the devil, COVID-19 doesn't stand a chance against our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
AMEN!