



The fundamental question of our lives is: Who is Jesus Christ for me? Am I one that praises him merely with psalms and shouts of joy? Or, is my relationship deeper and authentic? Is it real?

Christ is without a doubt a “sign of contradiction.” To follow him means to follow him in the good moments and in the bad ones. The Christian path is one that necessarily follows Christ and thus necessarily passes through the disdain of the world, through moments of difficulty and temptation, through the Cross. The key to living these moments is not one of brute, will-powered resistance, but, as Christ shows us, love.

The joy that we may experience in recognizing Christ as our Messiah may be great, but it is nothing in comparison with what it will be in Heaven. Christ has “conquered the world” and promised us eternal life.

A few words from Pope Benedict XVI, Celebration of Palm Sunday (2012):

Palm sunday

“Let us return to today’s Gospel passage and ask ourselves: what is really happening in the hearts of those who acclaim Christ as King of Israel? Clearly, they had their own idea of the Messiah, an idea of how the long-awaited King promised by the prophets should act. Not by chance, a few days later, instead of acclaiming Jesus, the Jerusalem crowd will cry out to Pilate: “Crucify him!”, while the disciples, together with others who had seen him and listened to him, will be struck dumb and will disperse. The majority, in fact, was disappointed by the way Jesus chose to present himself as Messiah and King of Israel. This is the heart of today’s feast, for us too. Who is Jesus of Nazareth for us? What idea do we have of the Messiah, what idea do we have of God? It is a crucial question, one we cannot avoid, not least because during this very week we are called to follow our King who chooses the Cross as his throne. We are called to follow a Messiah who promises us, not a facile earthly happiness, but the happiness of heaven, divine beatitude. So we must ask ourselves: what are our true expectations? What are our deepest desires, with which we have come here today to celebrate Palm Sunday and to

begin our celebration of Holy Week?

Dear young people, present here today, this, in a particular way, is your Day, wherever the Church is present throughout the world. So I greet you with great affection! May Palm Sunday be a day of decision for you, the decision to say yes to the Lord and to follow him all the way, the decision to make his Passover, his death and resurrection, the very focus of your Christian lives. It is the decision that leads to true joy, as I reminded you in this year's World Youth Day Message – **"Rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil 4:4)**. So it was for Saint Clare of Assisi when, on Palm Sunday 800 years ago, inspired by the example of Saint Francis and his first companions, she left her father's house to consecrate herself totally to the Lord. She was eighteen years old and she had the courage of faith and love to decide for Christ, finding in him true joy and peace".