

Palm Sunday 2019

“Christ became obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.
because of this, God greatly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name which is above every name.”

We heard these words in our second reading today and again as the verse during the Gospel acclamation. Our fallen and sinful human nature has since the time of Adam and Eve felt the need to disobey. We disobey God and break the commandments, as children we disobey our parents, we disobey our teachers, and sometimes we break the law. We want to do what we want to do. Christ shows us a different way. Christ learned obedience by doing the Father’s will. Christ was obedient to his Earthly parents, even though he was the Son of God. Christ encouraged people to be obedient to civil authority by giving to God what was God’s and to Caesar what was Caesar’s. We heard his accusers give false testimony on this point in today’s Gospel. To obey, some might say requires us to be weak, to bend our will to others. On the contrary, all of this requires a will strong enough to control its impulses, to say, “Yes, I want to do this, but I choose to say no.” Not repress the desire, but channel it. That being said, such an explanation sounds like we are strong-arming ourselves into submission. It is not like that at all.

The difference is love. Christ knew he was loved by the Father, and he loved his Father in return, so obedience was not a burden. It was the natural consequence of that relationship. We, too, love God, but we still desire to do things our own way. Our own way, our way of doing things, is what led Christ to the cross. His death passes judgment on our ways. His death shows us that we need a new way. Following our Lord, let us recommit to loving God, and be obedient to God, even to the point of death, if that where it takes us.