

## Easter 2020 – A slap in our Arrogant Face

Easter and Holy Week is coming, and I remember with sorrow the past years. Years that I was younger and arrogant and “small” and I was so easily saying “next time”. Palm Sunday, I could have gone to church and see my friends and collect a few palms to take home; but I said it’s ok I will go tomorrow. Then Holy Monday came and the Bridegroom service, always small but celebrating; but I said there is plenty of time in the week to catch up. Holy Tuesday, busy in the office almost forgot the Hymn of Cassiane... and then Holy Wednesday is the date to go to for the Holy Unction, to get blessed, to repentance, to confess, but it is a regular Wednesday and maybe the Red Sox are playing... Holy Thursday comes along with the 12 Gospels, I really want to go to Cambridge, they always do such a nice job, or maybe at Braintree...but it’s too far and there is traffic. Friday for sure I will go. It is Holy Friday, almost always raining and at 3:00 I will go to St. John the Baptist to witness the removal from the Cross; a service that always reminded me the sacrifice and faith of the entire week. But a meeting, or a phone call came in the way...it’s ok I will go tonight to the Epitaphios, I can go to the small chapel on the hill at the school, or at Watertown where the traffic stops for blocks, or at South End where locals watch and pray through their windows. It is so calm to follow, hold your candle, feel the companionship, feel the love and care of the entire community as I walk behind the priests and whisper the hymns. And at the end, I will kneel below the Epitaphios and ask forgiveness. Yes, I will definitely go... but, but, but ... there is always the next day. Holy Saturday, it’s 10:30, I am tired for the work week, I want to go to the Cathedral and see his Eminence and the Cardinal who always joins to celebrate life over death.... it’s quarter of twelve and now I will be late, it’s ok “next year” ...

... and now 2020 is the “next year” and I can’t go... I can’t pray, kneel, ask for forgiveness, see my friends, I can’t hug and say “Christ has Risen”. What I took for granted is no longer here. What I grew up with is taken away. What was a constant is suddenly cancelled. And this year at midnight I will be with my family, light a candle, close my eyes and imagine a full church, as the light comes out breaking the darkness of death and a luminous blanket will warm our hearts. I will kiss my wife and son, and imagine I turn and kiss the stranger next to me, pass the light and rejoice in the miracle of life. This year there is no “next time”, this year is a slap in our arrogant face, this year I turn the other cheek, learn what humility is and be grateful for all.