

***O gates, life high your heads; grow higher, ancient doors.  
Let him enter, the king of glory!  
Who is this king of glory?  
The Lord, the mighty, the valiant; the Lord, the valiant in war.***

***O gates, life high your heads, grow higher, ancient doors.  
Let him enter, the king of glory!  
Who is this king of glory?  
He, the Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory.***

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

The above words are from Psalm 42, and I never tire of pondering them. They are, more than one commentator has observed, the words of the angels in heaven. That same heavenly host we join with at every Mass, calling out “Hosanna in the highest; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.”

But because they’re angels, and therefore not bound by bodily existence, they can call out more than one set of words at a time...or eternally. And so, even as they call out “Hosanna,” the words of Psalm 42 are theirs as well.

As heavenly angels, and not fallen ones, they serve God’s will. They desire, along with God, the salvation of humanity. They eagerly await the Savior to come, and work salvation, and gather the saved. And they call out for this Savior: “Lift up you gates, let the King of Glory come in!”

But when he does enter, they are surprised: “Who is this King of glory?” It’s not the king these angels, unbound by bodily existence, expect; for this king bears the likeness of human beings. This king is in our flesh, not angelic spirit alone. How can humanity be the means of human salvation? It goes against their pure angelic reasoning.

So they try again, calling out a second time: “Let him enter, the king of glory!” Again, they behold the same saving king, in our flesh, now beholding in that same flesh the wounds of his passion. Not only is God in human flesh, but God, in our flesh, bears our sins and sorrows, knows our brokenness and death.

It is not how angels would have worked out salvation. Their twice questioning “Who is this?” expresses their incredulity. So great is the mystery of human redemption, so great the mystery of the heart of God, that angels fear to tread there. “Who is this king of glory? It can’t be the Crucified and Risen One!”

Their words could just as well be ours.

How often do we “know better than God?” How often do we dismiss the gift because it goes against our logic? How often do we deny God in the face of human suffering? “How can God allow such things,” we protest, or despair? Where is God in this broken world, this world of viral pandemic, this life of disruption and uncertainty and fear?

Right where he's always been. At the door, at the threshold, at the very entrance to our hearts, our lives, and our living. Angels may fear to tread there, but it's home to us. And if we dare to live there, we will know Him. If we can offer our lives, with Him.

This Palm Sunday of the Lord's Entrance also proclaims His Passion, the Sacrifice by which we are redeemed, joined to His Saving Passion. May "my sacrifice and yours be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father." And "may the Lord accept the sacrifice...for the praise and glory of His Name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church."

And may we soon resume together, in time, our "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Knowing that the angelic host continually and eternally offers these same words on our behalf.

May God Bless,  
Fr. Grogan

