

Remarks to the 2019 National Catholic Prayer Breakfast
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+Bl. Mother, Sts. Veronica, Simon, Dismas, Magdalen, Paul, Thomas More, Alphonsus Ligouri, Mother Teresa +John Cardinal O'Connor

Happy Easter! What a joy to celebrate the Resurrection, the victory of Jesus Christ- unfurled in such an unexpected way!

Holy Week is an exposition on how God does not choose what we would choose. Jesus mounts a colt; He mounts the Cross; and finally, a throne of glory!

This year, I was deeply struck by Palm Sunday, our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and what caught my attention as never before were the words Jesus used when instructing his disciples about untethering the "colt, the foal of an ass."

Now I realize I'm in a political arena right now- but let me be clear- this is in no way a reference to a particular party! Okay.

Jesus said, "In anyone questions you, tell them, 'The Master has need of it.'"

These words pierced my heart. "The Master has need of it."

That Jesus, the Master, would have need of anything was stunning, so humble.

But this is the truth that affirms each of us at the core of our being...The Master has need of you.

God did not "need" to create us for His own happiness...God chose to need us. To make the fulfilment of his plan contingent upon, dependent on our choosing to respond to Him. Just think of Our Blessed Mother!

I love the detail we are given about this little colt-the scriptures tell us that no one had ridden it before! Here is it, this immature one- inexperienced, weak, nothing to prove for itself. And yet **chosen** and **necessary** for the Master.

This seemingly ill-equipped, unprepared beast of burden carried the One who tells us His burden is light.

Typically, leaders associate themselves with their strengths- and often through no fault of their own- they've been pointed out, trained and are expected.

But Jesus chooses the weak one, perhaps to shame the strong.

He chose you as you are, not for your gifts and talents, but deeply aware of your incapacities and desiring you as you are - in your poverty, your surrender, your trust. He shows forth His glory through what seems unlikely. "My power is made perfect in weakness."

The Master has need of you.

You carry Jesus...you are his ride into this modern day Jerusalem, the Capital of our Nation...and as you travel daily through the caprice of human praise, opposition, pressures from every side, He is with you and within you. It is here He is crucified, suffers and dies, and rises triumphant to establish His Kingdom...in human hearts.

St. Paul allowed Jesus to ride on his weakness...he said, "I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities; for when I am weak I am strong."

Jesus loves you and wants your weakness. When you surrender it to Him, you can be strong with His strength and you will be able to endure the insult that comes from defending the sacredness of every human life, made in the image and likeness of God, male and female, born and unborn. You will be able to withstand the persecution that comes from holding to the truth about marriage and the family. You will see the weaknesses of others, their needs, not as calamities or hardships to be despised or overcome...but as an entrustment and opportunity to serve the vulnerable and the least.

Let's turn to Jesus now, to offer our hearts to Him and take a moment to name our weaknesses, to ask the Holy Spirit to let them surface...places where we feel powerless. Let's hand them over, surrender them one by one.

At this time in history, in our nation and in the Church...we need a "century of saints."

And you were chosen and are necessary for such a time as this.

Trusting in the Lord's never-failing Mercy...You expired Jesus.