

April 9, 2006
Palm Sunday
Fr. Larry Richards

The first reading is on page 69, and it is a reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. Now, pay attention here to the first line, or the first couple of lines. “The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary, a word that will rouse them.” And then it says “morning after morning, He opens my ears that I may hear, and I have not rebelled, I have not turned back. I gave my back to those who had beat me.” So even in the midst of – it sets up for us that even in the midst of the crucifixion – the Lord gave everything – that he might lift up the weary. Now think about that, already prophesy in the beginning – that everything he did was to lift up us who are weary. A couple of weeks ago, I was in Sinking Springs, I think you got to see some of the stuff – it was a great place, a great crowd, great priests. Everything was perfect from that place. And, there was a priest there who is older than me, but ordained only two or three years. And I was sitting there talking to him about how tired I get when I am in the middle of Lent, and all the Parish Missions and all the retreats and everything else, and trying to do it all – I was just like-complaining! And he says “isn’t it wonderful though, Father that our weariness refreshes others.” And I go “oh, yea, that’s nice.” But it is the truth, and you know what it is, is Jesus’ weariness, Jesus’ suffering, Jesus being beaten, Jesus dying on the cross, Jesus going through the torture brings us help, healing and love. It gives strength to us who are weary. And as we enter this holiest of weeks, you know, we need to remember that this is what it is about, because again, sometimes Lent focuses us so much on ourselves and what we are doing or what we are not doing. You know, ok “I had this thing I was going to give up for Lent and I didn’t give it up the way I am supposed to” and then we just feel bad and we look at ourselves and we think, “boy, I’m not perfect, and when am I going to stop doing this stuff...” And the devil keeps us focused on self! But we have to get this! That this week – this Lent – everything that this stuff is about He did to lift us up who are weary! That’s why He did it – to lift us up who are weary. And if you and I enter into this week like this...that when I come to all the services I can this week, He does this to lift me up because I am weary – to give me strength. Then this Holy Week will be a phenomenal Holy Week for us because then we focus on Him and what He did for us instead of who we are and what we did or didn’t do for Him this Lent or in our life. So that is where we must begin – that Lent, Holy Week, Passion Sunday, all the Triduum is about what Jesus did for us. And so the first thing that should make us is grateful. The second thing that should make us is refreshed. So will you focus this week on “oh, I can’t eat meat on Friday and I have to fast, oh, my...” Or will you let Jesus refresh you and say “listen, I want to set you free from your slavery to your body - I want to set you free from your slavery of sin – come to me. I want to refresh you. Look at me on the cross – I do this to give you life. Look at me weak – I do this to make you strong.” And it all begins – the same thing then is what He now does is then gives us the example. You see, but unless we sit there and let Him do this for us first, then we try to do it for others under our power and forget it. You get irritable – well not you maybe, but me...you know, we get irritable, we get tired and we focus on self and we think “now wait, the reason I do this is because He did it for me. Oh, ok. So what

I have to do is be refreshed by Jesus and now I can go and do it for Him.” But He is the savior – not me, not you - Him. Ok? So, you have to let Jesus save you and refresh you first. Then, you and I have to sit there and say “now Jesus, gladly use me. I want to be used. Jesus, I want to be weary for love of you and the people you have brought in my family, my friends, the people around me.” And see, it is an all together different way when you and I enter into Holy Week saying “Lord, ok, now that I have experienced your refreshment, now I want to experience your weariness. I choose this then Jesus.” And if you and I choose then to enter into this Holy Week and give our lives and love for others, then our life, our tiredness, our giving away of ourselves will bring refreshment to our families and to our friends. And then, Holy Week becomes real for us. As He did, so I do. But I still let Him do it for me first. Got it? Get it? May each of you know His love today and forever! Amen!