

Bishop Jaime Soto – Homily for Palm Sunday,
March 28, 2010
Cycle C

Three times during the horrifying, bloody spectacle of the Calvary Jesus is ridiculed for not saving himself.

The rulers of the people sneered at him saying: “He saved others, let him save himself if he is the chosen one, the Christ of God.”

The Roman soldiers mocked him saying: “If you are King of the Jews, save yourself.”

Even one of the dying desperate criminals still have enough breath in him to revile his condemned companion, “If you are King of the Jews, save yourself.”

Three times they taunted Jesus to save himself believing that he could not. Jesus did not save himself because he would not.

Paul tells us clearly in the second reading today, *Jesus* “did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself ... he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Jesus did not save himself. He saved us. He suffered for our sins and obediently accepted death so that we might have life. His death was the blood of the New Covenant between God and His people.

His death was not the outcome of the determined anger and outrage of the rulers of the people. His death was the radical outcome of his desire to serve us and save us.

Even as he endured the savage and brutal shame of his passion, he healed the severed ear of one of his capturers. He consoled the weeping daughters of Jerusalem as he feebly stumbled under the weight of the cross on his way to Calvary. While he anguished suspended on the cross, straining his crucified body for every breath, he turned

to gaze upon the other condemned companion and with tender longing said, “Today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Let us pray for the grace to be the Lord’s companions. We are condemned by our sins but we saved by His grace. We cannot save ourselves but we are saved by His enduring love. Let us drink from the cup of the New Covenant of His blood and bend our knee to the Lord Jesus who embraced us with his outstretched arms on the cross.