

# Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord – April 8&9, 2017 – “It Is Finished”

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It was more than ten years ago now. A man who had, for most of his life, walked with families in their times of deepest sorrow and most profound loss, who had prepared their moms and dads, their grandmas and grandpas, their wives, husbands, and even kids to be seen one last time at wakes; a man who had escorted grieving families into churches and cemeteries for rites of burial, this man was now facing, in his own life, an illness that the doctors had told him there was nothing more they could do to hold it at bay. This good man, who had been around death all his life, knew that brother death would soon come for him.

But there was a wedding planned. His beautiful daughter was getting married in the late spring in the family parish church and she wanted her Dad to walk her down the aisle. As sick and as weak as he was, he steeled his will to get to that day. And, on a beautiful, warm spring afternoon, Joe slowly walked his little girl down the aisle, she more holding him than he her. They made it to the front. He gently kissed her cheek and put her hand into the hand of her groom. Through tears, we all watched him disappear then into the sacristy where there was a cot set up for him so he could lie down and rest.

It was the last time I ever saw him alive, but he had willed himself to live to accomplish this one last great work in his life.

Jesus had come into the world to do His Father's will. His work was to become one with the creatures His Word had brought into being. His

work was to teach them, to call them, to lead them, to heal them, to forgive them, to love them, to suffer with them and for them, to die in their place for all their sins, though He was innocent and deserved their reverence, when all they gave Him was their scorn.

The dying was upon Him. There would be no heavenly intervention, no righting this horrible wrong, no miracle, no cure, no coming down from that cross. He was at the end but He willed Himself to do this work He had taken on His shoulders more than thirty years before. It was for this hour that He had come, for this hour that He had lived.

He raised His bloodied head, opened His swollen eyes for one last look at the beloved city of His Father, one last look at His beloved people who didn't know what they were doing, and He spoke in a voice that had a surprising power and a mesmerizing effect, "It Is Finished ... It Is Finished."

We did not know it then, but He had just walked us down the aisle to heaven ... His very last work upon the earth.