

Love Jesus in all who suffer, Pope Francis says



Pontiff uses Palm Sunday Mass to decry Sweden, Egypt attacks Love Jesus in all who suffer, pope says

Vatican City April 10, 2017

Jesus does not ask that people only contemplate his image, but that they also recognize and love him concretely in all people who suffer like he did, Pope Francis said.

Pope Francis leads the Palm Sunday Mass on April 9 at St. Peter's Square. (Photo by Alberto Pizzoli/AFP)

Jesus is "present in our many brothers and sisters who today endure sufferings like his own — they suffer from slave labor, from family tragedies, from diseases. They suffer from wars and terrorism, from interests that are armed and ready to strike," the pope said April 9 as he celebrated Palm Sunday Mass of the Lord's Passion.

In his noon Angelus address, the pope also decried recent terrorist attacks in Sweden and Egypt, calling on "those who sow terror, violence and death," including arms' manufacturers and dealers, to change their ways, Catholic News Service reported.

In his prayers for those affected by the attacks, the pope also expressed his deepest condolences to "my dear brother, His Holiness Pope Tawadros, the Coptic Church and the entire beloved Egyptian nation," which the pope was scheduled to visit April 28-29.

At least 44 people were killed and dozens more injured April 9 from bomb attacks on two Orthodox churches in Egypt as Coptic Christians gathered for Palm Sunday Mass; the attack in Sweden occurred two days earlier when a truck ran through a crowd outside a busy department store in central Stockholm, killing four and injuring 15 others.

The pope also prayed for all people affected by war, which he called, a "disgrace of humanity."

Tens of thousands of people carrying palms and olive branches joined the pope during a solemn

procession in St. Peter's Square for the beginning of Holy Week.

In his homily, the pope said that the day's celebration was "bittersweet."

"It is joyful and sorrowful at the same time" because the Mass celebrates the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem as the people and disciples acclaim him as king, and yet, the Gospel gives the account of his passion and death on the cross.

Jesus accepts the hosannas coming from of the crowd, but he "knows full well that they will soon be followed by the cry, 'Crucify him!'" the pope said.

Jesus "does not ask us to contemplate him only in pictures and photographs or in the videos that circulate on the internet," but to recognize that he is present in those who suffer today, including "women and men who are cheated, violated in their dignity, discarded."

"Jesus is in them, in each of them, and, with marred features and broken voice, he asks to be looked in the eye, to be acknowledged, to be loved," the pope said.

We have no other Lord but him: Jesus, the humble King of justice, mercy and peace.

Carol Glatz, Catholic News Service