

April 5, 2020

It is Palm Sunday and I will watch Mass with Cardinal Cupich in an hour but watching Mass is not Mass for me because we are not together, but we will be. If we had continued with the plan to record or live stream Mass, I know now I would not have been able to do it because I would just cry.

So, I want to tell you about a poem that I think understands our situation. It was written many years ago, before 1923, by a doctor/poet who had spent the night at the bedside of a very sick little girl. The doctor's name was William Carlos Williams and he practiced medicine and wrote poetry in Paterson, New Jersey.

He said that while the night spent taking care of that little girl occasioned the composition, his relationship with a very poor man who worked in the seafood industry prepared him for the words he found to tell the story.

The poor laborer's job was to stand all his working day knee deep in ice and pack fish into crates to be shipped to markets. It was a hell hole job, but the elderly man did it with meaning because it needed to be done so people could have food to eat. He said he was never cold because he saw the purpose of his contribution.

The poem:

**so much depends
upon**

**a red wheel
barrow**

glazed with rain

water

**beside the white
chickens**

A humble thing like a wheel barrow and, yet, maybe not today, but certainly for much of human history, so very much depended on it, it made so much happen and, relatively speaking, so much easier. On a farm of the day it would not even be noticed, maybe in contrast to the white chickens, it could have been taken note of, but probably not.

It's existence was just taken for granted without even a nod of appreciation.

I leave you to think, my friends, of the taken for granted in your lives as I will in mind on this long Palm Sunday.