

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion Year "C"

March 23-24, 2013

Readings: Luke: 19:28-40; Isaiah 50:4-7; Phil 2:6-11; Luke 22:14-23:56

What does the Church expect of us this Passion Sunday, the traditional beginning of Holy Week? Does this feast mean something more to Christians than a recurring annual custom, a simple custom of providing palms to be placed behind your crucifix, beautiful as that custom may be? Jesus knew what was in store for him as he entered Jerusalem. We have been reading about these steps leading up to this morning all this past week in the daily cycle of readings. With the benefit of historical perspective we too know the outcome. Still, it is painful, for Easter Sunday must be preceded by Good Friday.

Jesus comes today not as a political revolutionary, but as a spiritual leader, as the Lamb of Sacrifice. In the long run, this would be entirely more effective, but truthfully at the time, it disappointed some. Jesus came to transform our consciences, and such an inner transformation demands so much more of us than if he had come simply to overthrow oppressors. He did much more. He came to die for them. He came to die for you and me.

Through the Cross, and only through the Cross, the gates of the Kingdom will be opened. If today then, we join with the jubilant crowd and shout our Hosanna to the Messiah, let us seriously remember that as Christians, we know only One Lord, one King, one Messiah, who was rejected by all—including us—and who alone knows and opens the path to the Kingdom. Some mock the Cross, some mock the Holy Father Emeritus (as in the most recent travesty produced by an Art teacher in Milwaukee), but as angry as we may become, we mustn't forget that Jesus came to die for them too.

Let us pray for the courage to accompany the Lord on that long path this week. I most heartily encourage your participation in the Sacred Triduum: Morning Prayer, the Easter Food Blessing, extra confession times, Holy Thursday and Good Friday, etc. May our fervency in prayer this week make up for our laxity in too many others.

Simon Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow afterward." Lord, help our hearts to be ready whenever you call, that we may walk the road to Calvary, patiently bearing our crosses.