

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

Year A

Is 50:4-7

Ps 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

Phil 2:6-11

Mt 26:14 - 27:66

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It seems to me that our lives are filled with opposites. Sometimes when we buy a plane ticket we have to go North from where we are to be able to go South to our destination..... In trying to be happy, very often we make others miserable because of our own selfishness and our self-centered behavior. In today's liturgy we hear two Gospels with a procession each. One leads us into Jerusalem with Jesus' being welcomed and proclaimed and we cheer with the crowd "Hosanna to the Son of David..... Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" The other procession pictures Jesus leaving Jerusalem a few days later in disgrace and abandoned, going to his own crucifixion. There we also join the crowd cheering with other words: "Crucify him, crucify him!"

The liturgy today tells of the duality of our human response throughout history to the goodness and love of a merciful God. Throughout our lives, we accept Christ as our Savior and like the crowd, we cheer with branches and proclaim him as the Son of God and at other times, we reject and push him out of our lives and crucify him again and again in our actions, in our lack of compassion, every time we fail to recognize him in the poor or in those in need.

During these past days we have been invited into a journey that took us from the Jordan to the desert, and then high on the Mountain of the Transfiguration. From there we went through Samaria and found the woman at the well..... we have been thirsty and in need of light. Very often we have asked the Lord to give us new life when we have been in the many tombs of our existence and today we enter the holy city! We enter with the Lord into Jerusalem and begin these most holy days. This week we will remember once again..... Our memory will take us once again to tell this story of suffering and passion, of betrayal and death. Our foreheads still burning with ashes are washed to enter the holy city.....

There is not much we can do with the memories of this liturgy and of these most holy days. We are invited to stay awake and watch and remember. We are invited to enter fully into these mysteries of our own salvation. We are invited to carry our crosses and to recognize we are not alone: this community of faith accompanies us. The Lord walks with us. We recognize that we will experience once again the joy of the Resurrection but before that, we keep walking to the holy city. May the memories of these most holy days bring us hope and healing. May they help us to die to self to rise to new life.