



Palm Sunday



Date: Sunday, April 9, 2017 | **Season:** Lent | **Year:** A

First Reading: Isaiah 50:4–7

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 22:8–9, 17–20, 23–24 | **Response:** Psalm 22:2a

Second Reading: Philippians 2:6–11

Gospel Acclamation: Philippians 2:8–9

Gospel Reading: Matthew 26:14–27, 27:11–54

Preached at: the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Braamfontein in the Archdiocese of Johannesburg, South Africa.

In Matthew's Gospel which we have just heard and which really needs no explanation, the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus is a world-ending event. We are told of the violent shaking of the earth that was expected to announce the arrival of the end time. The whole city of Jerusalem shook when Jesus entered it amidst cries of hosanna, jubilation and welcome, and the earth itself shook as he died on the cross.

Amidst these earth-shattering events, however, perhaps there was a moment in between where you identified a person in the Gospel whom you felt was like you?

Because these readings are rich with opportunities to pray and contemplate and imagine who am I in this story.

Am I like the disciples who understood nothing, who fell asleep while the Lord was suffering. Perhaps in our lives we have fallen asleep?

Or am I like the disciples, who did not realize what it was to betray Jesus?

Or like that other disciple, who wanted to settle everything with a sword?

Am I like them?

Am I like Judas, who pretends to love but then kisses the Master in order to hand him over, to betray him?

Am I a traitor?

Am I like those people in power who hastily summon a tribunal and seek false witnesses: am I like them?

And when I do these things, if I do them, do I think that in this way I am saving the people?

Am I like Pilate? When I see that the situation is difficult, do I wash my hands and dodge my responsibility, allowing people to be condemned—or condemning them myself?

Am I like that crowd which was not sure whether they were at a religious meeting, a trial or a circus, and then chose Barabbas? For them it was all the same: it was more entertaining to humiliate Jesus.

Am I like the soldiers who strike the Lord, spit on him, insult him, who find entertainment in humiliating him?

Am I like Simon of Cyrene, who was returning from work, weary, yet was good enough to help the Lord carry his cross?

Am I like those who walked by the cross and mocked Jesus: “He was so courageous! Let him come down from the cross and then we will believe in him!”. Have I mocked Jesus....

Am I like those fearless women, and like the mother of Jesus, who were there, and who suffered in silence?

Am I like Joseph of Arimethea, the hidden disciple, who lovingly carries the body of Jesus to give it burial?

Am I like the two Marys, who remained at the Tomb, weeping and praying?

Am I like those leaders who went the next day to Pilate and said, “Look, this man said that he was going to rise again. We cannot let another fraud take place!”, and who block life, who block the tomb, in case life comes forth?

Which of these persons am I like?

As we enter Holy Week and consider more deeply the death, but most especially the resurrection of Jesus Christ, my prayer is that you might try and stay with the readings and imagine yourself inside them, alongside Jesus. In this way you can truly accompany Jesus in his Passion to Easter.

Ask yourselves, which of these persons am I like?

Do I believe?

Do I have hope that Jesus is the Son of God, who will rise again? Have I allowed Jesus, in all he has said and done for me, and in what we celebrate this week with him, to shake my world? Or do I shake my head and not believe.

Let us pray that our belief our faith, our courage and our joy might not be lacking. Let us give thanks to God for sending his Son to us and for saving us.

Amen.

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2017-04apr-09-ya-lt-ps/>

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