

*Our Lady of Lourdes*

Palm Sunday

March 28, 2010

Readings:

Isaiah 50:4-7

Philippians 2:6-11

Luke 22:14-23:56

Fr. Bob

We began our liturgy, calling to mind the great victory of Christ, as he entered his holy city. The palm branches symbolize that. The crowds were waiting. They were excited and everything was good: as it should have been. But it didn't take long, for everything to go wrong. Before our story is over, Jesus, crucified and broken, breathed his last and expired. From victory, to a horrible death. We learn from the story that our God knows: what it's like to be heralded as a king on one day, and condemned quickly on another.

Our God loved so much, that the price of the palm branches led to him taking up his cross, literally. Our God shows us the extremes of this world, and shows us the world as it is.

In the passion, Jesus shows us several things. In the midst of it all, he healed the ear of the high priest's servant. As things were falling apart around him, he still spoke the truth to Pilate. He had empathy for the women of Jerusalem. He actually forgave those who condemned him. In his dying, he had compassion toward another criminal being crucified with him.

In the story of the passion, we hear about the evil part of our world. But we only hear about the best in Jesus Christ. We hear how people can change and be part of something bad. But we also hear how Jesus Christ was consistent with all that he preached.

And this is our problem today as it has been for Christians ever since. In facing any personal passion and being with those who face their own Calvary, we are called to do likewise: to be consistent with what we profess, even when it looks like things are falling apart. If Holy Week means anything, it means that we should end this week, as we began it. Walking away from inflicting pain, so that we can also be healers. Stopping our lies, so that we can speak the truth. Resisting the temptation to judge others, and we do it well, and embracing empathy and forgiveness. And searching for the strength, as Jesus showed us, to be more of a people who offer generosity, forgiveness and compassion. No more, and no less is asked of us, who have just heard the story of Jesus' victory, not just as he entered Jerusalem, but as he entered into his own suffering and his own passion.