

28 March 2010

Passion (Palm) Sunday

The Word

What part do I get to play in the drama?

If you are very familiar with a story, you may be only half-listening to it when it is read out. The story of the Passion of Jesus is like that. One way to listen to this story with new ears is to try and figure out which of the characters in the story is most like yourself. I take it for granted that no one would consider that Jesus is the one they most resemble. So what about the other characters. Ask yourself ...

Am I among the disciples who went to the garden with him but fell asleep when he needed them? When the going got tough, the tough got up and left. Or maybe Judas is the one I resemble most! One of the psalms says, "If an enemy had betrayed me I might have understood, but it was you, my friend, who sat at table with me." And for what do I betray him? For what?

Perhaps Peter is the part for me. I'm full of promises - what I wouldn't do for Jesus! But then a little teasing from my mates or I'm challenged about my faith and I fold up, my courage goes out the window, and I walk away, trying to get lost in the crowd. But at least if I'm like Peter, I know that the Lord's forgiveness awaits me round the corner.

Or there's Pilate. He was in charge. He should have given a lead. But he was a weak man. His need to be popular made him switch off his conscience and allow an innocent person to die. What gets through to me, I wonder - the mindless crowd or the truth? Maybe I stand with Herod. His only interest in Jesus was to make fun of him, get a cheap bellylaugh from his courtiers at Jesus' expense.

And there are other characters I could play - the good thief who found out just in time where real happiness lay and made his confession before the world. Or one of the faithful women who wailed and mourned openly for him while their men folk did a bunk. What part do I get to play in the drama?

Reflect

We are beginning a week of triumph and tragedy. Jesus leaves his friends at Bethany, Lazarus, Martha and Mary, and sets out on a journey that will end on Calvary. The rabble will cry hosanna for him today but by Friday they will be crying for his blood. His friends will desert him, one will betray him and another deny him under oath. He will be tortured and ridiculed. The night before he dies he will leave to his timid followers the unbelievable gift of himself under the form of bread and wine. And when his enemies have done their worst to him and left him dead in a sealed tomb, he will confound them all next Sunday.

The one of whom today they say, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord," will next Sunday show himself a true King, the conqueror of death. Make a real effort this week to journey with Jesus along the way. Set out with him in his triumph today. Stay close to him in his lonely tragedy next Thursday and Friday, feel his absence on Saturday; then at the Easter Vigil and on next Sunday morning prepare to celebrate his second and greater triumph - his glorious victory over death which is the key to our salvation. Are you ready to walk with him this Holy Week?

Do

Take some time to look at cross or crucifix. Imagine what it must be like to be crucified. Remember that Jesus willingly gave his life out of love for you.

Pray

On the cross, Jesus forgave his enemies, those who had put him to death. Pray this week for all those who have hurt you. Ask the Lord for the strength to forgive.

Learn

- * The cross of Christ is proof of the lengths to which God was prepared to go to save us.
- * Jesus died for us out of love.

Say

“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him may not die but have eternal life.”