

Palm Sunday, Cycle B.

Isaiah 50:4-7 Philippians 2:6-11 Mark 14:1-15:47

HOMILY

Today is the beginning of Holy Week. During this coming week, we will be reflecting on those days leading up to the passion and death of Our Lord. Then on Holy Saturday night and Easter Sunday morning we celebrate the joyful event of Jesus' resurrection.

We have just heard Mark's account of Jesus' passion and death.

Let us, first of all look at the unfortunate display of human nature:

- a. Jesus is betrayed to his enemies by one of the twelve;
- b. Peter, the leader of the twelve denies him publicly three times;
- c. the other disciples all deserted him,
- d. the religious leaders in Jerusalem to protect their own position hand Jesus over to Pilate and Pilate gets Jesus executed.

Yet, on the other hand, the story begins and ends with a portrayal of some of the best displays of human nature.

- i. At the beginning we have a woman who showed a profound respect and true identity of Jesus by anointing him with costly ointment.
- ii. At the end of the story, we have the Roman centurion who also recognized that true identity of the crucified man, declaring, *'in truth, this man was a son of God'*.
- iii. Present also were the women disciples of Jesus who would soon come to his tomb to dignify his burial by anointing him with spices.
- iv. We also have Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin who had condemned Jesus to death but who now gave Jesus a dignified burial, placing his body in a tomb newly hewn from the rock.

What do we learn from this all? When evil seems to triumph, goodness is often to be found there somewhere. The light of goodness displayed by these people is a reflection of the greater light that was there, the light of Jesus' love.

In this Holy Week, like the woman who anointed Jesus, like the Roman centurion, the women followers and Joseph of Arimathea we are all called to reflect light in the darkness of our time they lit a candle in the darkness of their time. We are called to do the same. Jesus continues to suffer and to be crucified in our world today. We are called to serve the suffering Jesus among us, remembering his words, *'as long as you do it to the least of these, you do it to me'*.