

**Palm Sunday, Cycle B**  
**April 5, 2009**

**Readings: Mark 11:1-10; Isaiah 50:4-7; Philippians 2:6-11; Mark 14:1-15:47**

**Are Your Fridays *Good* Fridays?**

We started our celebration this morning with a procession, remembering the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover Feast. He came into town along with the other unblemished lambs being brought in for the Passover sacrifice.

We started with Jesus in Glory, but ended with our gospel reading of His Passion. The people who honored Him and gave Him glory because He was recognized as the Messiah, were now worked up by the Pharisees and the high priests and demanded His execution because He claimed to be the Messiah. Because He was the Messiah He was honored, and because He claimed to be the Messiah He was rejected. How rapidly things can change. How quickly we can lose faith in what we believe when we are challenged and pressured by the society around us; when we want to go with the flow and not stand out as being different.

Following Jesus means being different; it means not being of this world. Jesus is the Way, but His way is not society's way. But we find it difficult to be different. And the more society turns away from God, the more obvious our differences will be; and the more difficult it will be for us to stay on the right path. I can argue that it is more difficult now than it was when I was a child. Fifty years ago, the morals of our society were pretty much the same as those taught in church. Fornication, premarital and extramarital sex, was wrong; abortion was wrong; homosexuality was wrong. Standing up for Christian beliefs did not make you stand out in a crowd. But that is no longer true. Being a devout Christian today will mean being open to ridicule and persecution; but it is still the cross we are meant to carry.

We gather here on Sunday mornings and we give honor and praise to God. We sing the Gloria and before the Eucharistic Prayer we sing Holy, Holy, Holy, Hosanna in the Highest; the words that greeted Jesus as He entered Jerusalem. But we need to reflect on what we do the rest of the week. Do our actions match what we say we believe? By the time the end of the week comes around, is our Friday a *good* Friday? Have our actions continued to proclaim "Hosanna in the Highest" or have they proclaimed "Crucify Him!, Crucify Him!?" Do we carry our crosses with Jesus, willing to be mocked and persecuted, or do we conform to the society we live in and become persecutors ourselves?

The good news is that even when we fall, when we fail to stand up for and act according to our faith, that Jesus will still not abandon us. He will say: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Let us give thanks for a loving and forgiving God, but let us strive to never offend Him again.

**Deacon Joe Hulway**