

Palm Sunday – 2021

Today, Palm Sunday, begins the Holy Week observance ending with the crucifixion of our Lord on Good Friday. The juxtaposition between the alleluias on this day and the cries of “crucify him, crucify him” on Friday is almost palatable. The actions and words of these two days are representative of the heights and the depths we human folk manifest in our encounters with both the Divine and one another. When something really pleases us we can be exuberant in our response with thoughts of graciousness and thanksgiving; conversely when we are deeply upset or discouraged we may respond in ways that denigrate not only others but ourselves as well.

Holy Week allows us the opportunity to do some assessing of our lives, the way we live, the way we act, the way we respond. It is a time of discernment in which we can inventory our lives. Why, when things are going well, is it so easy to be kind and understanding and when things become difficult I become difficult. Our friends and families are the beneficiaries of both patterns of behavior. The challenge for us is to act responsibly in both circumstances. The problem with difficult times is that we function from the perspective that I, my personhood, is somehow being threatened. Rather than seeking the comfort of our friend or spouse or God we sometimes picture them as adversaries or people who do not care and we strike out at them and in reality, using baseball terms, we do in fact strike out. We lose.

The people who praised Jesus on Sunday were many of the same people who struck out at Jesus on Friday because something about him in those latter moments threatened them. Jesus' response to those actions was to say, “God forgive them.” We know in the end, because of the resurrection, life wins out over death. It can be true for us as well when in our moments of discouragement we choose trust in God and our family and friends rather than fear. May God give us the will to accept the value of that trust in our lives.

Amen