

## **Palm Sunday 2019**

LK 19:28-40; Is 50:4-7; Phil 2:6-11; LK 22:14—23:56

We have all had times when we felt ganged up on, all had times when we were attacked yet were only trying to do good, all had times when we lost the respect of others. Jesus experienced all these things through his passion and death. He knows the feeling of loosing your position in the eyes of other people, and being brought low - but this is not the end of the story for him, or for us. Jesus willingly surrenders control and goes through his passion for our sake, and in the end it looks like a total defeat. However, on Easter Sunday, the story we heard today continues - Jesus enters a state that is far beyond the ability of other people to hurt him.

We probably feel that we can relate to the bad treatment Jesus received, but there are a couple of big differences between us and Jesus. He who is God, who had no need to come to save us, allowed himself to be brought far below where he came from to come and save us. When we feel angry that people don't treat us as we think we should be treated, we can feel that now we have the right to lash back and that we can now do it in our own way - laying aside God's law of love and mercy in the process. Jesus has much more right to do this than we do, but instead he takes on an attitude of humility and obedience, we hear: *he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; ... he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* He doesn't fall into the human tendency to overpower those who are tearing him down, instead he allows the Father to take up his cause. He is obedient and humble and we hear that *Because of this, God greatly exalted him.* It takes a different sort of courage to follow the commands of God and trust that at some point God will even things out - but that's what Jesus does as an example to us.

Jesus also suffers great physical pain to accomplish his mission and to set us free. We suffer mostly wounding to our pride, and a loss of material things - Jesus is treated much more unjustly and loses his life. The prophet in the first reading foretold this: *I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting.* Even in this, he continues to look forward to His Father to set things right: *The Lord GOD is my help, therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame.* He is most concerned with how he stands in God's eyes, not the eyes of other people.

What happens in that night of the Last Supper, and the Crucifixion on Good Friday, shows what he will lay that aside for love of us in order to sacrifice himself. Next time we believe that what we suffer is too unbearable, next time when we feel that we are so unfairly treated, we can remember Jesus. If we, like him, remain faithful to God's commands despite all that we suffer - we can be assured that the story does not end with that loss of dignity and suffering. If we remain faithful to God's law of love and mercy, God will ultimately lead us from difficulty and injustice and bring us to a place where no one can get to us.