

Two people in our gospel for Palm Sunday demonstrate the possibilities that face every human person: life and death, redemption and despair, the blessing and the curse.

St. Matthew describes these two men in terms of their profound betrayals of Jesus: the betrayal committed by Peter and that committed by Judas. Both men were part of God's chosen people, both were elected by Jesus to be members of his most intimate band of disciples, and both were accompanied by him on their journey of faith just as we are.

Peter and Judas walked together with Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, they dined with him at the last supper, they sinned against him in ways that stand in the spotlight of world history. Peter and Judas dwell in each one of us, not only on account of our common capacity for sin, but on account of our common longing to cure the effects of sin in our lives.

Peter found resolution to the sin that marked the turning point of his life by lamenting it and turning back to Christ, and so receiving forgiveness and a new beginning. Peter would later be commissioned by the risen Jesus to become the chief pastor of his earthly flock and to give his life in witness to Jesus.

Judas on the other hand is so racked by the horror of his betrayal that he despairs of forgiveness and takes his own life, thinking that the only resolution for his decision was death itself.

Entering this holiest week of our year, Matthew, Paul and Isaiah invite us to look again at Jesus and to see him through their eyes. As we accept the idea

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that Jesus was both victimized and invincible, we understand more fully how he was truly the revelation of God's way of being.

If, like St. Peter, we believe in Jesus as the revelation of God's never-ending love, our own notions of sin and punishment and forgiveness will begin to mirror God's mercy. Then our lives can offer the world what it needs most: a living image of Jesus, the revelation of God's great love.