

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord – April 14, 2019

Isaiah 50: 4-7 Philippians 2: 6-11 Luke 22: 14 – 23: 56

Most of us, at one time or another, have felt overwhelmed by our lives and the challenges we may face. We may experience pain or suffering, rejection or loss. This is not a lament about these things. Rather, it is a recognition of reality.

With that in mind, we heard today the account of the  Passion and Death of Jesus Christ as told by Saint Luke. The facts are familiar to us. What they represent, in the manner that Saint Luke tell us about them, is the tragic manner in which Christ is united with us in the reality of this life.

Consider this: the whole life and ministry of Jesus is upended, thrown into disarray. Peter, at first, was ready to defend Jesus with a sword, and then denies him. Even Jesus, we confronted with suffering and death experiences in his human nature a very personal crisis as well as indecision.

Then there are the unexpected contradictions that abound in this account. For example, those who are supposedly learned in the law mock and condemn Jesus. A pagan Pilate declares that there is no case against Jesus. A foreign Roman governor, Pilate, becomes a friend of a native-born, traitor and ruler, Herod, who is greedy for power and wealth. A bandit proclaims Jesus as king and a Roman soldier says that he is innocent.

Many of us, too, experience contradictions in our own lives.

In other words, as we hear the account as told to us by Saint Luke we can consider the challenges that we all face and recognize that Jesus Christ, the God-man, encountered so much. Despite this, despite even death on the cross, it was not a tragic end but a gateway to triumph. What Jesus experienced, what he suffered, would lead to the Resurrection, to new life.

A message that we can hear today is that in all challenges and difficulties we may encounter in life, we can be joined with Jesus in confidently trusting in a good and gracious God.