
28 Sunday

P A L M S U N D A Y

Isaiah 50: 4 - 7
Ps 21: 8-9, 17-20, 23-24
Philippians 2:6 - 11
Luke 22:14 – 23:56

Palm Sunday's liturgy brings us through a mixture of emotions. Maybe it's too rich a mixture to digest properly while we're taking part in the liturgy or praying in our own private space this day. So it may be more helpful to focus on some detail or other in the scriptures of the day --- the excitement and joy of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (the gospel before the procession), or the firm faith and fortitude of the Suffering Servant in the prophet Isaiah's song (Is.50), or the quiet deep dignity and rich meaning of the hymn about Christ's dying and rising that St Paul quotes (Phil.2).

St Luke's story of the Passion and death of Jesus has details the other evangelists don't mention. Perhaps one of those could focus our prayerful contemplation: for instance, the intensity of Jesus' prayer in the garden that caused Him to sweat blood, or the words He had for the women following His way of the cross. Maybe most poignant and moving of all, those moments in the courtyard when Jesus turned and looked straight at Peter after Peter had for the third time denied he knew Jesus. Peter saw Jesus' look, and it struck him straight to the heart: he immediately remembered what Jesus had said to him, and he went out and wept bitterly.

Jesus turning to look at Peter, and Peter's bitter weeping fed the prayer of many mystics in the middle ages. Bitterly recognizing the awful sinfulness of what he'd done, denying his friend and master, Peter's weeping also acknowledged the immense love he felt that Jesus had for him.

Strength and protection may Thy Passion be.

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