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20 SUNDAY

P A L M S U N D A Y

Isaiah 50: 4 - 7  
Ps 21: 8-9, 17-20, 23-24  
Phil. 2: 6 - 11  
Matt. 26: 14 – 27: 66

On this day, our fellow-Catholics at church liturgies all over the world listen to the story of Jesus' suffering and dying, as told (this year) in St Matthew's gospel. It's good to listen, at least once in a year, to that full story. There are a lot of details, and maybe we're not familiar with all of them. It's also an uncomfortable story to listen to, even depressing perhaps. How best pray, reflect, meditate on these long gospel chapters? After once listening to or reading over the text, maybe just go back to one incident (for instance, Jesus' appearance before the governor, Pontius Pilate, from ch.27 v.11). This incident is in a real sense a world-event, not merely a detail of Jesus' suffering. In asking for grace to feel with Jesus in what He suffered for us all, let me not be too focussed on myself and my individual salvation: this is for everyone, and may the fruit of my reflection and prayer be a greater awareness of the passion of Jesus today in my world, and my involvement and responsibility in it. The details of Jesus' appearance before Pilate are reflected in things that happen in the modern world too: political persecution and religious prejudice and intolerance are still alive. Reflecting on their contribution to Jesus' passion, let me examine my own behaviour and attitudes, and reflect on how I'm influenced by the world around me and in turn contribute to the injustices of society. Yet Jesus accepts to undergo these humiliations, in order to raise each of us up with Him in the glory that the Father gives.

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