

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, Cycle C
March 28, 2010

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

Don't be a Spectator

If you were an Israelite, a Jew, living 750 years before Christ was born, what would have been your thoughts when you heard what the Prophet Isaiah recorded in our first reading. He prophesied these words from God's servant: ***"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."***

The Israelites were awaiting a Messiah that would be a strong military leader and ruler. We can wonder who they thought this servant, that Isaiah talks about, could be. We now know that the Servant prophesied by Isaiah is Jesus Christ. The writings of Isaiah predict the humiliation, torture, and execution of Christ. The people had this teaching for 750 years but they didn't get it; they didn't connect the dots because it wasn't what they expected.

The prophets were never liked or accepted. They often told the people things they didn't want to hear. But we must remember that we are called to be prophets; we need to profess our faith in Christ and to preach that faith to others even when they do not want to hear it.

Isaiah's servant said: ***"The Lord GOD has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them."*** Christ spoke, but only the weary and down-trodden were roused. The leaders ignored Him and rejected Him and finally put Him to death in an attempt to silence Him. But obviously, He was not silenced. His message has spread to all corners of the world through the ongoing actions of His Body, the Church. And we can stop today as we enter into Holy Week and reflect on whether we are doing our part to spread the Good News? Are we willing to be good prophets even if it means our own suffering and persecution?

In our account of the Passion this morning we see characters we can place in three categories. We have a relatively few, Judas and the Jewish leaders, who were against Jesus. We have a relatively few, Mary, John, and the disciple who cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, who stood up for Jesus. But mostly what we had were spectators; some were stirred up by a mob mentality, but most, including most of the disciples, watched from a distance. They were afraid to defend Jesus even though they claimed to believe that He was the Messiah, the Son of God.

What camp would you have been in that Good Friday 2000 years ago? What camp are you in today? Are you willing to be a prophet? Are you willing to defend the teaching of Christ and His Church because you claim to believe that He is our Savior and our God?

Defending the truth in our society is a battle. There is a culture war taking place; a battle between good and evil, a battle between light and darkness, a battle between a culture of life and a culture of death. Be willing to stand up for the truth even if that means you share in Christ's persecution. Do not be a spectator.

Deacon Joe Hulway