

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion
April 17, 2011

Readings: Matthew 21:1-11; Isaiah 50:4-7; Philippians 2:6-11; Matthew 26:14-27:66

Who Do You Say Jesus Is?

(presented prior to the procession with palms)

Today we have two gospel readings; the one we just heard, and the reading of the passion that will take place in church at the usual time. Both of our gospel readings are from the gospel of Matthew and they serve as bookends for the story of Jesus' last week of ministry.

We just heard how Jesus entered into Jerusalem. He knew full well what was in store for Him. And the people shouted: "*Hosanna!*" In a little while in our second gospel, we will stand in for the same Jewish crowds less than a week later and shout: "*Let Him be crucified!*"

The last line of this first gospel has the Jewish crowd proclaiming: "*This is Jesus the prophet, from Nazareth in Galilee.*" In our second gospel we will have another declaration of who Jesus is. But this time it is from the Roman soldiers, not the Jews. They said: "*Truly, this was the Son of God!*" Who do you say Jesus is?

I mentioned that our two gospel readings are like bookends of the last week of Jesus' ministry. The first is from the Chapter 21 of Matthew, the second from Chapters 26 & 27. The chapters in between are rich with stories of what Jesus did and what He taught in that last week—what He wanted to communicate to us before He suffered and died for us. I would encourage you in this next week, during Holy Week, to pick up your Bibles, turn to the Gospel of Matthew, and read those stories in between—to journey with Jesus through the events that lead to the cross. It will help you know Him better.

Deacon Joe Hulway