



Hosanna!

Palm/Passion Sunday

April 13, 2014

Stewardship Thought For The Week

"I think of a hero as someone who understands the degree of responsibility that comes with his freedom." Bob Dylan

"Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops threatening its life-support system. We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own indeed to embrace the whole of creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder. Recognizing that sustainable development, democracy and peace are indivisible is an idea whose time has come." Wangari Maathai

Christian Stewardship is rooted in the belief and acceptance that everything comes from God and everything belongs to God. We are called to be stewards of all that God has entrusted to us. This includes the care of not only ourselves but for all others and our environments. Through offering our time, talent and treasure to God, we respond in faith to our baptismal covenant. To be a true and faithful steward we must accept that God is the greatest giver. As we are all made in the image and likeness of God, we are called to give, and to be careful and wise stewards of all the resources with which God has blessed us throughout all our lives.

"Living is giving.

We live life best as we give our strength, gifts, and competencies in the service of God's mission.

We are called to serve, not survive.

Our giving makes a difference in our families, our work, our communities, our world and our church." Kennon L. Callahan

"Don't search for Jesus in far of lands, He is not there.

He is close to you. He is with you.

Just keep the lamp burning and you will see Him.

Keep on filling the lamp with all these little drops of love, and you will see how sweet is the Lord you love." Mother Teresa.

Thought For The Week

Scriptures: Isaiah 50: 4-7 • Philippians 2: 6-11 • Mark 14: 15-47

"Heaven on Earth is a choice you must make, not a place we must find." Dr. Wayne Dyer

I believe it was Mr. Andy Warhol that once said, "In the future everybody will be world famous for fifteen

minutes.” I imagine many people in the world today share that misleading notion, if not for a lifetime, then surely for fifteen minutes.

On this Palm Sunday, we are introduced to a small group of people, all of them Israelites, who had formed a modest parade to call attention to a young prophet from Galilee, a friend of theirs, who had done marvelous deeds back in his own home territory: inspiring religious speeches, healings, even calling forth certain friends back from the dead. His name was Jesus of Nazareth. In the minds of those peasant folk who welcomed him to the capitol city that day with cheers and branches of palm, this young prophet was truly in their eyes a “Warhol character.” Oddly enough, he rode into the city on a donkey, if you can imagine that, because for these folks standing along the way this was to be their friend’s fifteen minutes of fame.

Of course, it was a true parade, even if it was a modest one, because parades by their very nature have the power to bring joy and exuberance to young and old alike.

I chose this short introduction on “fifteen minutes of glory” as a preface to one of the most noteworthy events in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. As we read in the gospel, crowds of people from the countryside were flocking to Jerusalem for the celebration of Passover. It could be compared to the Worlds Fair or World Youth Day all in one.

Among that vast crowd of local folks and people from all about the Middle East, there appeared on this day (the day before Passover) a rag tag group of followers of Jesus the preacher and wonderworker from Nazareth. They were his disciples, listeners, and learners, peasant folk who wished to understand the meaning of the good news of the kingdom of God. As we are told, they came from the surroundings of Galilee in the North where public figures of great consequence seldom journeyed to celebrate anything. Nonetheless, this young preacher had gained a worthwhile following of local folks who thought of him as the one who would finally establish the true kingdom of God and supplant the kingdom of the Roman/Jewish state.

What better way, therefore, to celebrate his success than to bring it to the capitol where other great religious and secular events were traditionally celebrated? They followed, therefore the usual the custom of welcoming notables by throwing fresh branches and colored streamers in his way.

This event probably did not attract the vast crowds that had journeyed to Jerusalem that day, but for this modest group from Galilee, this would be their one opportunity to introduce their leader to the world, even for fifteen minutes.

All these events are vividly described in the gospel of Mark. In an earlier time in Church history it was simply named Palm Sunday, a reference to the branches brought to the event by Jesus’ followers. Today, however, many refer to it as Passion Sunday. In other words, the palms do not tell the whole story. When we read the story of the passion of Christ on this day we come to realize that the joyous palm procession and the subsequent suffering and death of Jesus are all of one piece. Jesus predicted that this would be the outcome of his preaching and his way of life, his great kingdom vision and his public rebellion against the powers of Rome and the temple.

More to the point in all this is to say that Palm Sunday and Good Friday come together in the lives of most of us. If the Christian of our day believes that following Jesus will simply be a cheerful “fifteen minute parade,” they will be sorely disappointed. Rather, we should insist that anyone, whether Christian, Jew, Moslem, believer or unbeliever, who imagines that following Jesus Christ does not cost something, that person will be greatly mislead regarding the meaning of the Kingdom of God.

Life itself is a strange mixture of bliss and heartache, happiness and disappointment. However, with the happy memory of the palm parade in mind, we should still be able to bear the tragedies of life that are bound to follow. Fifteen minutes will not be sufficient to satisfy the longing of the one who imagines life in terms of eternity.