



Liturgy of the Palms Sunday, April 14th, 2019

Imitating Whom?



Patrick Comerford – Jesus Entering Jerusalem

Today, we begin the journey into Holy Week with the celebration of Sunday of the Palms which marks Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and by week's end, his execution.

Lent is a time when we can come to a deep understanding of the human being, human society and God. It is in Lent that the stories we read, focus upon the nature of the person, society and history. Central to our conclusions these last weeks, has been the idea that amid the wonder and beauty of the human, there stands a brokenness located in the very structures that we build: the state, religion, and even the family. The traditional way of putting it was that they are all "fallen". For much of Christian thought, this fallen-ness or broken-ness, has had to do with what we imitate or copy. Our desire to imitate to compete with each other, where we want to be like the other, to have what the other has, becomes a 'race to the bottom'.

On Palm Sunday, we come to a clear challenge: who is it that we will imitate? We hear of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, leading a procession of peasants, in opposition to a simultaneous entry of Pilate from the opposite side of the city, leading an imperial procession. Palm Sunday is a story of the conflict of opposing world views, where Jesus champions life and the kingdom of God, in contrast to Rome's empire of violence and death. But there is something else here as well. While the crowd enthusiastically supports Jesus, soon, they will ultimately imitate the religious and political leaders and call for his blood. Jesus becomes the scapegoat for all the pent-up frustrations of the masses, the victim of violence, even as he attempts to provide an alternative path forward, which embraces building peace. Whom do we imitate – Christ (*imitatio Christi*), those who sell themselves to power and influence (*imitatio Pilatus*) or the confused masses (*confuse multitudinis*)?

OUR GATHERING

A Period of Meditation Taize

(Jacques Berthier, sung by Thomas Music Group)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXP3oUatFt0>

The cross is carried in

Welcome and Invocation

In the name of God our Father and Mother

In the name of the Son

In the name of the Holy Spirit

The Lord be with

And also with you

Let's Sing: I danced in the morning (TIS 242, Lord of the Dance, Sydney Carter)

Opening Prayer

Acknowledging the World's Brokenness – Our Brokenness

In this prayer with which we begin Holy Week, we acknowledge our own sin and brokenness. In the New Testament, the word for sin – *hamartia* – means to “miss the mark”. In a sense it is about missing the point of living. In John's Gospel, there is an expression “the sin of the world”. We hear it also in the eucharistic liturgy. In essence it is about the way in which we always violate God's will for humanity, often wilfully, but more often, because of a lack of insight, because of our shallowness. Today we offer prayers of confession through the eyes of two celebrated British authors – both of whom had profound perception into the human condition and human history: George Orwell and Aldous Huxley.

Lord,

We know we are trapped in brokenness:

John called it the “sin of the world”.

But what does the sin of the world look like?

George Orwell in his work “1984” saw sin as oppression of the human spirit. Aldous Huxley, in “Brave New World” saw sin in the same way, but with greater subtlety.

Orwell feared those who would ban books;
Huxley feared the day when there would be no reason to ban a book, because no-one would want to read one.

Hosanna: ***save us from lethargy!***

Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information;
Huxley feared those who would give us so much information, that we would become passive, air-heads.

Hosanna: ***save us from stupor!***

Orwell feared the truth would be concealed from us;
Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance, white noise.

Hosanna: ***save us from dullness!***

Orwell feared we would become a captive culture;
Huxley feared that we would become a trivial culture.

Hosanna: ***save us from indolence!***

Brokenness, sin, is not always about tyranny.
It is also about our every-day infinite capacity
for distractions,
for avoidance of reality,
for evasion of meaning.

***Lord God,
Rend the heavens and come to us.
Pull us out of the mire.
Keep us afloat.
Help us bear the 'weight of reality',
with the 'weight of salvation'***

Help us to have the courage to imitate you.

Sharing the Peace

LET'S HEAR THE WORD

Some Observations about Reality, Broken-ness and Imitating

Coming face to face with reality involves taking charge of the weight of reality. Reality is given to the human as responsibility. Reality is also weighed down by sin, by wasted lives, by broken trust, by the scandal that whole peoples have been annihilated and forgotten

Ignacio Ellacuría

The human is indissolubly linked with imitation: a human being only becomes human at all by imitating other human beings.

Theodor Adorno

The imitation of Christ does not mean to live a life like Christ, but to live your life as authentically as Christ lived his. Then there are many ways and forms in which a man can be a Christian.”

Henri J.M. Nouwen, The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society

What Jesus invites us to imitate is his own desire, the spirit that directs him toward the goal on which his intention is fixed: to resemble God the Father as much as possible.”

René Girard, I See Satan Fall Like Lightning

Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29

This psalm, chosen for the celebration of Palm Sunday each year, is a psalm of thanksgiving and celebration, befitting Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. It had strong connections with the Easter season in the early church and it was used in early Christian theology. It is the psalm set for Easter Day each year. The verses set for today come from the beginning of the psalm and from its end. In the latter, the psalmist celebrates the victory that God has won. The threat to Israel behind this victory is set out in vv. 10–13, in which the psalmist portrays a situation of being surrounded by hostile nations, and of being pushed hard, facing defeat. The Lord, the psalmist proclaims, has come to the rescue.

Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good,
and his love is eternal.

***² Let the people of Israel say,
"His love is eternal."***

***¹⁹ Open to me the gates of the Temple;
I will go in and give thanks to the LORD!***

***²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD;
only the righteous can come in.***

***²¹ I praise you, LORD, because you heard me,
because you have given me victory.***

***²² The stone which the builders rejected as worthless
turned out to be the most important of all.***

***²³ This was done by the LORD;
what a wonderful sight it is!***

***²⁴ This is the day of the LORD's victory;
let us be happy, let us celebrate!***

***²⁵ Save us, LORD, save us!
Give us success, O LORD!***

***²⁶ May God bless the one who comes in the name of
the LORD!***

From the Temple of the LORD we bless you.

***²⁷ The LORD is God; he has been good to us.
With branches in your hands, start the festival
and march around the altar.***

***²⁸ You are my God, and I give you thanks;
I will proclaim your greatness.***

***²⁹ Give thanks to the LORD, because he is good,
and his love is eternal.***

**Luke 19:28-40 (New International Version): during the reading
clothes are spread down the aisle.**

The biblical scholars, Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan suggest there was not only a procession from the Mount of Olives on the east that day, but also a Roman procession entering from the west, which would have had as a focal point the Roman governor named Pontius Pilate. The juxtaposition of these two processions would have set up quite a contrast. One came as an expression of empire and military occupation whose goal was to make sure oppressed people did not find deliverance. It approached the city using horses, brandishing weapons, proclaiming the power of empire. The other procession, used a donkey and laid down cloaks and branches along the road. The one who was coming in the name of the Lord quietly, but profoundly, proclaimed the peaceful reign of God.

²⁸ After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.²⁹ As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ³⁰ “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

³² Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

³⁴ They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

³⁵ They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

³⁷ When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

³⁸ “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”^[a]
“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

⁴⁰ “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Christ

Song: Ride on, Ride on (TiS 348, Winchester, Henry Hart Milman)

Some Thinking and Doing (about 20 minutes)

Today we are breaking into three zones for twenty minutes. Zone 1, meeting downstairs, includes those who wish to work together using their artistic talents as they work together on the theme of “Imitating Christ”. Zone 2, also meeting downstairs, includes the Korean-speaking community, who will develop their own thinking around “Imitating Christ”. Zone 3, meeting here in

the body of the church, includes those of you who wish to participate in a discussion/bible study led by Seng Eng. At the end, we will have a few minutes to share our work and conclusions.

Let's Give

Doxology

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
praise him, all creatures here below,
praise him above, ye heavenly host,
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.***

Prayer of Dedication

Prayers of the People

After each group of petitions, the one who prays, says, “*Jesus remember us*” and we respond singing just once, “***Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom. Jesus remember me, when you come into your kingdom***”, after each group of petitions.

소주제에 따른 중보기도 이후 중보기도자가 “Jesus remember us: 예수님 우리를 기억하소서.” 라고 말하면, 우리는 다음의 가사로 노래를 하며 화답기도를 합니다. 노래는 두번 연속으로 부르겠습니다.

Jesus, Remember Me

Ostinato Refrain

Je-sus, re-mem-ber me when you come in-to your King-dom.

Je-sus, re-mem-ber me when you come in-to your King-dom.

Text: Luke 23:42; Taizé Community, 1981
Tune: Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994
© 1981, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent

We end together in the Lord's Prayer prayed in our respective languages

***Our Father in heaven
hallowed be your name
your kingdom come***

***your will be done
on earth as in heaven.***

Give us today our daily bread.

***Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.***

***For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.***

하늘에 계신 우리 아버지여
이름이 거룩히 여김을 받으시오며
나라이 임하옵시며
뜻이 하늘에서 이룬 것 같이
땅에서도 이루어지이다.
오늘날 우리에게 일용할 양식을 주옵시고
우리가 우리에게
죄 지은 자를 사하여 준 것 같이
우리 죄를 사하여 주옵시고
우리를 시험에 들게 하지 마옵시고
다만 악에서 구하옵소서
대개 나라와 권세와 영광이
아버지께 영원히 있사옵나이다. 아멘

**Hymn: When his time was over (TiS 357, Wakefield Street,
Robin Mann)**

Blessing

May we live,
imitating Jesus:
confronting our brokenness,
discerning the spirits,
reading the signs of the times,
channelling our desire for *Christ's* purposes

Our service has ended.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ
Amen

**We sing twice: Shalom to you (TiS 778, Somos del Señor,
Elise Shoemaker Eslinger)**

Closing Postlude

Pianist/Organist

