**March 29, 2015 – Palm Sunday**

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Oh Palm Sunday, you are so VERY confusing!

First we hear:

Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!

Then we shout:

 Crucify him!

Imagine how confused Jesus’ followers would have been. They had, just the week before, entered into Jerusalem in a triumphant parade that seemed to fire up the whole town and spit in the eye of the religious authorities who had a hand in keeping the people under the Roman thumb.

But then, just a few days later, everything fell apart. And Jesus didn’t seem to be surprised or fazed by it all. The whole thing has a strange air of inevitability, like an avalanche starting from a tiny snowball at the top of a mountain.

Our lectionary readings today want us to experience both the exultation and the despair of those cataclysmic events. To feel the pulse pounding excitement of following behind Jesus waving palms and shouting praises to his name. And then to feel our hearts falling into the horrible pit as he is betrayed and led off to his so-called trial, and to know that someone we loved and trusted was the betrayer.

And in shouting “crucify him!” along with the fickle holiday crowd that day in Jerusalem, we feel how easy it was to go along with the mob, or with the authorities, rather than putting ourselves in danger. As such, we can relate to Peter, who assured Jesus that he, at least, would never abandon him, only to deny him three times. We, like Peter, say we would never do that, but do we know that for certain?

And we feel the blank shock and horror as our worst fears come true and Jesus is brutally killed before our eyes. Everything he told us about his coming again is forgotten as we see our future shattered.

This dramatic Gospel story could easily lend itself to a 45-minute sermon, but I’m going to stop now, because I want us all to sit with it for a few minutes and just let it sink in. And then, as we go on with our Eucharist, put yourselves in the place of the apostles as they experienced that first Communion, remembering what came before and what came after Jesus’ own words:

“Take; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.”

The Apostles didn’t really know what was coming next, even though Jesus had told them flat out. So they might have been mystified by calling their ordinary food his body and blood.

But we know how the rest of the story goes, and we know how it ends – in glory and salvation – and every time we share the Eucharist we give thanks for it.

So today, as we head into Holy Week, let’s just rest in that confusing space, knowing what’s ahead, but also knowing where the path will take us before we can celebrate our Lord’s resurrection.

Amen.