

**Palm Sunday, March 25, 2018**  
**Church of Reconciliation, San Antonio**  
**The Rev. Judith L. Rhodes, Associate Rector**

*Will you dare to be like Jesus? Will you dare?*

Last Sunday, we heard the Greeks and others shout, "We wish to see Jesus." And if you, like me sat here, listening to Bishop Reed, I, too, began to think, "Darn right, I wish to see Jesus, too."

So, here we are, seven days later, and Jesus shows up once again. This time on the threshold of the holiest of all weeks, greeted by those who greeted him with Hosanna's in a procession that would never find its way onto a news broadcast or any other social media outlet. No, not Jesus, who entered the city of Jerusalem to begin the march to his death on the cross. By now, he must have known the full extent of his impact on the governing forces of his culture. He was a threat to spiritual, political, and social leaders of his time who would only control and oppress the least, the lost, and the last by might and force, and violence. Not so much different from our own day. As we live in a system that still professes that the way to bring order out of chaos is through violently defeating "the other", whoever the other may be. Everywhere we look, we see this violence in video games, in cartoons, in movies and music, and lived out in global and local conflicts and violence.

Today, this Jesus, our Jesus, instructs us in his way of peace and reconciliation. Our Jesus models a radical and peaceful protest that points the way for how we are to live our lives in a world that has still not learned his way of peace, reconciliation, justice, and love.

Today, you and I are witnesses to his wildest and most politically explosive act of his public ministry. This is not some sweet childish procession of waving palm branches and shouting meek and mild hosannas. No. Today, we make our way in a procession with Jesus as he lampoons the political powers of his own day and ours as well.

Although we take seriously the fact that only a few verses in Mark's gospel actually recount Jesus' entry into the city, most of the story relates the care with which Jesus has made the arrangements for this event. Jesus has planned the entire occasion in advance. He has arranged for the colt and even provided a signal for the disciples to use with the people watching the colt. He is choreographing the entire event leaving no detail to chance.

As Jesus enters Jerusalem, Mark tells us that he went directly into the temple. It is the Jewish festival and we hear Mark comment that "when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out with the twelve."

Can you imagine what was on Jesus' human heart? Can you begin to feel the weight of his own grief as he takes it all in for the last time?

I shared with the staff on Tuesday, that this poignant scene touches my heart deeply as my sister shared with me last Friday that her stage 4 colon cancer continues to advance willy nilly throughout her body. No control there. No big gun weapons left to fight against it. And then she sent pictures of the new home she is renovating and decorating for her husband and family to make new memories even as she is no longer physically with them. I imagine Marianne and Frank taking it all in, indeed, "looking around at everything" in advance of the inevitable death that will claim her life as well.

I must admit how powerful it is to know that Jesus "looked around at everything" too, as he prepared to take his place in the procession to his death. This Jesus, our Jesus, did as we do now in our own lives, savoring the memories, the love, the joys, and remembering even the sorrows that human life has to offer him and us. And then, even as he took it all in, he continued his mission.

Would you and I have been in that crowd for Jesus? Would you and I have dared to wave our palm branches, shout hosannas and profess, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" Would we have dared to show us for Jesus? Would we dare to show up for him now?

In a world still careening out of control and in love with oppressive and violent power and control, you and I still have the freedom to show up for Jesus. This is Jesus at his most subversive best. This is Jesus, our Savior, who demands that we stand up for the voiceless, the powerless, the abused, the alien, the outcast, the lost in our day and time.

Just yesterday, millions of people stood up against violence, specifically, gun violence. None of us here, gun owners or not, NRA members or not, concealed carriers or not, wish to see one more shooting of innocent people, youth or children in this country or any other. How is Jesus calling us to stand up so that not one more violent death or rampage happens? How are we being called as followers of this subversive and radical Savior to proclaim peace, to do justice, and to walk humbly with our God?

Will you show up for Jesus this Holy Week? Will you eat with him, will you watch with him, will you walk with him to the cross, will you wait at the tomb, will you proclaim the power of the empty tomb?

Will you dare to be like Jesus?

Will you dare????