Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back” (Isaiah 50:5).

Palm / Passion Sunday

Lk 19:28-40: Is 50:4-7; Ps 22; Phil 2:6-11; Lk 22:14—23:56

A long-distance runner thinks of only one thing as he or she reaches the final stretch: Finish the race. As Jesus enters Jerusalem on what we call Palm Sunday, he is determined to finish what he began In Galilee. His nights in prayer and his grasp of the Scriptures had made clear that the Christ, the Son of Man, the Suffering Servant of God, would suffer to fulfill the Law and Prophets.

Jesus mounts a borrowed colt and rides into the city surrounded by thousands of pilgrims there to celebrate Passover. It is immediately clear to religious officials and to many in the crowd that he is invoking a key messianic image (Zech 9:9). The stage is set for confrontation. Jesus enters the temple and drives out the traders and money changers, invoking other texts (Jer 7:11; Ps 69:9).

From his triumphal entry to his last breath on the cross, Jesus completes a path of fulfilment he has been discerning since his baptism in the Jordan and his time in the Judean desert. As Isaiah foretold, Jesus has opened his ear and has not turned back.

The Lenten scriptures become a sacred drama with the start of Holy Week. Pedagogical experts say that of all the ways we learn—by seeing, hearing and

doing— doing leaves the deepest imprint. So, believers are invited to participate fully in the events of the final week of Jesus' earthly life.

Today, many of our congregations will re-enact the Palm Sunday entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Waving palm branches and singing "Hosanna," we become the crowds that long for the coming of the Messiah. Each of us is invited to imagine his or her role in that scene. Are you a curious bystander? A disciple eager to offer your cloak, a palm-waving friend of Jesus, perhaps even the donkey who carried him up the steep stone entryway into the city?

We are invited to open our ears to the scripture readings from Luke, Psalm 22, Isaiah, Philippians, then the Passion according to Luke, during which we will voice our parts in the story. We speak for Peter, who boasts of his loyalty, then denies even knowing Jesus. We are the voices of the elders, chief priests, servants in the courtyard, soldiers, Pilate, the crowd, a thief, a centurion who gives final witness to Jesus,

It matters that we are here, taking part, for everyone is asked to take a position on who Jesus is and what it means. Even silence and indifference are defined roles, a choice not to choose, to decide not to decide. Draw near and see the one who is laying down his life for you, out of love for you, as he passes by.

Enter the story, make it your own. Live it day by day, morning by morning, and don't turn back. Finish what was begun in you the day of your baptism. This is what it means to be a believer and a disciple, seeing, hearing and doing.

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