

March 20, 2016 Palm Sunday
You, who fear the Lord, praise him!

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalm 22:8-9, 17-24

Philippians 2:6-11

Luke 22:14-23:56

Isaiah acknowledges that God is his help and has given him a well-trained tongue to help those in need. Each morning Isaiah is responsive to God's will and he has not rebelled, instead he took abuse and suffering from others because he was determined in knowing that he would not be shamed or disgraced.

The psalmist describes how others scoffed and mocked him, pierced his hands and feet, and even divided his garments among themselves and he prays that the Lord be not far from him and aid him quickly. He will proclaim the faithfulness of the Lord in the assembly and remind all the brethren to continually glorify the Lord.

Christ Jesus came in the form of God but did not selfishly cling to it and took on the form of a slave. He emptied and humbled himself and was obedient to the point of death. Now God has exalted him and bestowed upon him a name above all names; every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord.

In the Gospel Jesus is brought before Pilate and charges are made by the chief priests and scribes. Pilate wishes not to find Jesus guilty but the accusers are most adamant. They release Barabbas while Jesus is led to his crucifixion. Above him, on the cross, a sign reads, "This is the King of the Jews." One of the criminals hanging beside Jesus recognizes his innocence and is told, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."



**The Father of mercies allowed
His Son to be crucified for our salvation.
The Holy Spirit guides us to take up our cross.**

Christ's humility and meekness stand in contrast to our very own tendencies toward self-promotion. Too often we strive to rise ever higher in people's estimation in contrast to Jesus who emptied himself of worldly pride and became the servant to all. It was on Palm Sunday that Jesus began his march toward Calvary. It is ironic that at the trial with Pilate Barabbas was released and his name has two parts to it: Bar Abba, meaning son of the father. The guilty "son" was released while the innocent "Son" was crucified.

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Where do we find a person that is willing to serve God without seeking advantage and reward? It is rare indeed to find someone so spiritual that has let go of all earthly attachments and consolations.

Give your whole self, do great penance, attain all knowledge, have great virtues, and all of these things may not amount to much unless you are guided by the words of Jesus: *Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.* (Mark 8:34)

When you have done all the things you know you ought to don't get carried away with yourself since the Spirit of Truth says, *When you have done all you have been commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'* (Luke 17:10)

(Adapted, Imitations of Christ, Book II, Chapt.11)

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