

Good Friday – 2020

Five days ago, we observed Palm Sunday. The crowd who followed Jesus, shouting Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! They cut leafy branches and laid their jackets and cloaks on the donkey and on the road before Jesus. Today, five days later, that same crowd who celebrated Jesus' coming with expectation and hope has forgotten who Jesus is.

Crowds followed Jesus throughout His public life. Crowds welcomed Jesus as He rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. People crowded the narrow streets of Jerusalem as Jesus carried His own cross to His crucifixion. Even the donkey upon whom Jesus rode did not realize just who Jesus was.

The donkey awakened the next morning, his mind still savoring the afterglow of the most exciting day of his life. Never before had he felt such a rush of pleasure and pride.

He walked into town and found a group of people by the well. "I'll show myself to them," he thought.

But they didn't notice him. They went on drawing their water and paid him no mind.

"Throw your garments down," he said crossly. "Don't you know who I am?"

They just looked at him in amazement. Someone slapped him across the tail and ordered him to move.

"Miserable heathens!" he muttered to himself. "I'll just go to the market where the good people are. They will remember me."

But the same thing happened. No one paid any attention to the donkey as he strutted down the main street in front of the market-place.

"The branches! Where are the leafy branches!" he shouted. "Yesterday, you laid down leafy branches in front of me!"

Hurt and confused, the donkey returned home to his mother.

"Foolish child," she said gently. "Don't you realize that without him, you are just an ordinary donkey?"

It is the profound moments in life, the moments in which life is changed, that can make the most impact on us. We realize just how precious life is and realize the most important things in life. We don't realize just what we have until it is gone.

Some of us will notice the little things, some of us may be able to see through the chaos and the uncertainty, some of us may be called us short by a moment or a word or a touch, but God, in His love for us and for the world stops at nothing to offer us a place with Him. Jesus is lifted up on a cross: some will turn away, but some will notice. Some will notice what is missing and what is left behind.

On this Good Friday, when so many things have changed and so many things are different than the normal we remember, we are invited to look further and look deeper. In Jesus' life and in His death, we can know God's love for us. Sensing God's love, we can proclaim with the centurion, "Surely this man was the Son of God."