

Homily for Palm Sunday
Sunday, April 14, 2019
By Deacon Bill Pitocco

We have two Gospels today. In the first Gospel, the crowds are triumphantly welcoming the new king into the city. They are filled with excitement, convicted about who Jesus is and what he will do for them. However, within a few days, as we see in our second Gospel, the same crowd is calling for his death, convicted that he is a blasphemer, shouting “Crucify him, Crucify him!” Taken together, they are a story of the contradictions of the human heart, a story whose happy ending comes with yet another change of heart. The resurrection of Jesus and the conviction that he is our God!

Holy week is the most sacred time of the church’s year, in which we remember the great events that reveal that God so loved the world that he sent his son to be our savior. Throughout His passion, throughout “holy week” - Jesus continues to offer healing to those who are suffering. Recall the gentleness that he shows in healing the ear of one of the people who came to arrest him. Throughout His passion, Jesus offers forgiveness to those who confess their sins. He knew Peter would be tempted by Satan and would betray him. Luke tells us that even in this act of betrayal Jesus continues to pray for Peter. Once he has repented,

he will be restored in his relationship with Christ and then have the task of strengthening the new and vulnerable Christians who are the church. Throughout His passion, Jesus offers Paradise to those who pray, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He is so ready to forgive the repentant thief and welcome him into the kingdom.

This week, Jesus is presenting us with a portrait of how we are to live and build a community of disciples who are the church. It is a life characterized by healing words and actions, forgiveness and trusting in the good of other people. Not the convictions we hold that can change from time to time! The response is left to each one of us: we can either be stubborn and trust only in ourselves, or we can ask for the help of God, and be open to accept it, like the good thief on the cross. Holy week invites each of us to journey with Christ in the events of the passion so that after Calvary we may come to live in the hope of the resurrection. Who will you heal this week, even though they have betrayed you, who will you pray for, who will you forgive this week!