

Hosanna in the Highest! Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna in the highest!!!!

Crucify him! We have no king but Caesar! Crucify him!!!!!!

What a difference five days makes. Public opinion turned so fast you would have thought they were on twitter. Hosanna! Crucify! Praise turns to condemnation in three short syllables.

The crowds, those unnamed faces that play a crucial role in the story of the passion, are often derided as being fickle and swayed by both the Sanhedrin and the Roman leadership. After all, both leadership groups had a vested interest in putting down this Jesus before he overtook their power. But we need to be careful in our condemnation of them because they are us.

We love Jesus. We are here aren't we! It's a festival day with a 132 verse Gospel reading! There are Broadway shows with fewer lines! We are a committed group. We know the creed, the ten commandments and the Lord's Prayer, just like are promised in the baptismal liturgy. We are GOD'S PEOPLE! Called to live in love and love our neighbor we are the body of Christ in the world today. Hosanna in the Highest!

Except when we have to love that person we don't want to love. When we have complained about having to hear those Black Lives Matter people who can't seem to talk about anything else or those folks who think that war is terrible, but we shouldn't get involved, even with the atrocities uncovered. Those times when we walk past a homeless person asleep on the street and think that if they only picked themselves up and dusted themselves off they would be able to make it, they just aren't willing and are lazy. Crucify him!

Just as the people then, we today love Jesus until Jesus' words threaten our comfort or comfort zone. Our tendency to go from Hosanna to crucify is just as fast today as 2000 years ago and I say our because I am just as quick to do so as any other person here or anywhere.

We are all just as quick to say the words of Peter, "No lord, I will never let that happen" and just as quickly will deny Christ three times by our actions, if not more.

I hear these moments in the Passion and seemingly, each year, they hurt more and more because I become increasingly aware of my tendency to be more like those people in the story instead of Simon of Cyrene or someone like that.

Yet, each year I also take a deeper hope from another part of the Passion and from the stories that we will hear in the coming weeks. For even when the crowd turns on him, even when Peter, one of his closest friends turns on him, when he has endured the physical pain of the nails and the weight of his body hanging from the pentabulum, the words are uttered that should have given them hope then and us hope today.

Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing....

It wasn't just to those Roman soldiers who had nailed him there and gambled over his few possessions. Those words were for everyone whose cheers had changed from praise to condemnation because it suited them politically or socially. The people who had heard the words of Christ, had come to him for healing, had reached to touch the very edge of his cloak in hopes that the power of God would pass to them, but when it came time to stand for him, they and we, look away.

Each time we shout crucify him in our actions or with words that sound different but mean the same. His response is the same, "Father forgive them, they don't know what they are doing." Then, Now and always. Amen