

Homily
Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion
April 13, 2025
36:25 – 43:45

We heard this morning from the prophet Isaiah, Isaiah Chapter 50, the third Suffering Servant Song. Friday we will hear the fourth Suffering Servant Song. Each one proclaiming something to be known about a servant who cared so much, he would suffer for the people.

We heard from Philippians of that one who emptied himself, took the form of a servant. A description echoed in the Passion, when Jesus describes himself as “servant.” But we’ve also witnessed that servant being constantly accompanied along this journey.

Ever since Chapter 8 of Luke’s Gospel account, when he declared for the first time that he would suffer and die, and rise, he set his face toward Jerusalem. We heard the culmination of that journey in the opening Gospel passage, the triumphal entry.

Now, from the time he announced that he was going to suffer and die – until that moment, he had companions on the way. His disciples, the people that wanted to listen, the people who wanted to eat, the people who were in need of healing. And he was their companion, as well. Caring for them as he could and as he wished.

But now he’s proclaimed triumphant. And the whole city, it seems, is proclaiming him. Even as on the other side of the city, Pilate is coming in for this time of Passover to make sure that nothing bad takes place. That there are no riots. There are no uprisings.

Jesus has companions at the Passover meal. He has companions in the garden. He is not alone, ever.

Even when he is taken away, Peter goes to the courtyard and stays very close. Yes. He denies, but he is there, close by.

We see that again and again in the Passion narrative that we heard. There’s always someone near. Even his disciples and the women who cared for him, observing it all.

And then the final companion. Two. The thieves hanging to his right and to his left. The one reviling Jesus, asking him to use his mighty power and get them off the crosses.

The other, a sinner who admits it. He admits that he's a thief. And he simply asks of the goodness of this one – Jesus. "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." He makes a profession of faith, there, hanging on the cross.

And the gift, "You will be with me in Paradise." They will accompany each other in their death into Paradise.

In the final moment, Jesus quoting Psalm 31, a Psalm of lament, of seeking God's refuge, or God as refuge in all circumstances. "Into your hands I commend my spirit."

In other words, he gives himself over to the Father. He is not alone.

This is unique in Luke's Passion narrative. It's unique in Luke's Gospel. There is always companionship. But also in the midst of that compassion, a word similar to "companion," which means "to eat with." Panis is bread in Latin.

Companion is one who eats with. Compassionate is one who suffers with.

What shall we do with this?

May I suggest, my brothers and sisters, that as I learned when I came here in 2016, we are companions on the journey. It's our journey to Jerusalem, whatever that may be. But we are not alone. There have always been other believers with us.

And, the Lord Jesus. To heal us. To care for us. To lead us. To guide us.

And as we follow, we become disciples, all on a journey. May we journey together throughout this week. This week of great passion, profound moments of service, of eating – banqueting, of recalling once again the suffering --- and the wonder of the Resurrection.

We are companions on the journey, no less than those in the Gospel according to Luke.