

Palm Sunday  
March 20, 2016

Rev. Fred Daley  
All Saints Parish, Syr. NY

Sisters and brothers, for the past 40 days of Lent, which began on Ash Wednesday, our All Saints community has joined with the Church throughout the world, in a period of prayer, fasting and almsgiving – in an attempt to experience a ‘spring-cleaning of our hearts.’

On this Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week, we are invited to reflect on the first Palm Sunday:

Two processions entered Jerusalem on that spring day in the year 30. It was the beginning of Passover, the most sacred week of the Jewish year...

One was a peasant procession – from the East. Jesus rode a donkey down the Mount of Olives, cheered by his followers: the poor, the disabled, rejected and excluded..., the broken, the oppressed. Jesus was from the peasant village of Nazareth, his message was about the Kingdom of God, the Reign of God: a vision of justice and peace, love and compassion, forgiveness and mercy. His followers, marching that day, were mostly from the peasant class.

On the opposite side of the city – from the West, Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, entered Jerusalem at the head of the Imperial Army: an imperial show of power – cavalry on horses, columns of foot soldiers with leather armbands, helmets, and weapons; Pilate’s procession proclaiming the power of the Empire.

Sisters and brothers: in this Spring of 2016, two processions are marching in our world: one of power, domination, oppression and injustice; exclusivity, selfishness, greed, environmental disaster... sustained by fear and violence. There is also, a second procession – much larger – composed of the poor, the oppressed, the powerless, the excluded, the dispossessed... the disposable....

The same question faces those of us who would be faithful to Jesus today: which procession – in our heart of hearts – do we really want to be in?

This is the question of Palm Sunday, this is the question of this Holy Week that is about to unfold.

This week we are invited to reflect deeply on both personal transformation (our ‘spring cleaning of our heart’)... on death to the old way and rising to new life; AND also on political transformation... death to domination by imperial systems and structures and rising to the new – global – vision of the world as God intended it to be. Amen!