

Palm Sunday

Here are some of the salient features of Mark's account of Jesus' passion in which we can very well identify our own human condition as well as the condition of so many other people in the world:

1. Jesus' mental agony as he prays at Gethsemane during which he feels mentally broken and agitated with sorrow even to death with the thought of all the suffering and public humiliation he will have to undergo (Mk: 14:32-34).

2. Jesus' obedient submission to God's will that he suffer and die (Mk: 14:36), while his disciples fail to comfort him as they fall asleep (Mk: 14:37).

3. Jesus' betrayal by one of his own disciples, Judas, with a kiss, out of greed for money.

4. The dramatic as well as pathetic denial by Peter that he ever knew Jesus by cursing and swearing an oath (Mk: 14:71) as he comes under the pressure of a servant-girl and bystanders (Mk:14: 69-70).

5. Jesus' desertion by all his own disciples as they fled at the time of crisis (14:50-52).

6. Pilate's decision to order his crucifixion under pressure from the crowd and his desire to satisfy the crowd or to please the Jewish authorities, though he knows that Jesus is innocent or not guilty of any criminal charges leveled against him by the Jewish authorities (15:6-15).

7. The humiliation and insults done to Jesus by stripping his clothes and giving him a mock cloak, crown of thorns, saluting him as a mock king, spitting on him, striking him on the head with a reed and crucifying him in the midst of two bandits (Mk: 15:16-20,27).

8. The ridicule and insults by passers-by, chief priests and scribes who challenge him to come down from the cross and save himself so that they may believe he is the Messiah.

9. Jesus' feelings of being forsaken not only by all near and dear ones but even by God himself (15:34) and his sacrificial death with a loud cry (Mk: 15:37).

What is our response to God's word?

How do we respond in faith to situations/experiences of abandonment, rejection, loneliness, desertion and desolation of our lives faced by Jesus during his passion? Do we respond to it positively or negatively; with faith or doubt in God's goodness? Does Jesus' powerful example and identification in every human condition become a source of grace and strength for us?