

Today we begin Holy Week, our journey with Jesus to his cross and resurrection. We have already begun to walk with him, and with the crowds that followed him. Our journey began with shouts of joy, as we joined the crowds who laid palm branches on the road before him, creating a royal carpet for him to travel over. But quickly the cries of hosanna changed to cries of crucify him. We will live with those cries throughout this week.

As we walk with Jesus on this journey, we will get to know him even more closely than we already know him. If we take the time during the week to watch and to listen, we may come to realise things about Jesus that we had not noticed before. I wonder what might be the first thing that you notice. Perhaps it could be his obedience to the Father and his faithfulness to his mission. We will see that he faced death, like most people face death, with a certain amount of fear. He prayed that the cup of suffering that he was about to drink might be taken from him. But even in the midst of such fear, he professed his willingness to do his Father's will. What we might notice especially is his trust in his Father. This is what will sustain him throughout the days of suffering.

Perhaps you might notice the dignity with which he faced opposition and mockery. He recognised there was a time to be silent. In fact, his attitude and actions spoke more loudly than any words he could have uttered. The words he did speak were short statements of the truth. The dignity he displayed troubled Pilate, who washed his hands of the matter. In the end, the truth of who he is will be revealed in his resurrection.

Perhaps you might notice that the way he faced his passion and death was consistent with the way he had lived and proclaimed the gospel. His message was about the love of God, and he gave people an experience of that love in the miracles he worked. Those who jeer at him want him to perform a miracle by coming down from the cross. But they missed the point of his message. The miracles were signs of God's love, not feats of magic. On the cross, Jesus displayed the ultimate act of love. He gave his life for others.

As we notice aspects of Jesus' life and mission over this week, we should let ourselves be even more deeply attracted to him and his gospel. The sight of a man hanging on a cross wearing a crown of thorns is not attractive. As the prophet says: we turn our faces from that image. Yet,

if we look closely, we see more than that. We see an act of love. Then we can remember how he stood by others in their adversity, how he treated all people with dignity, and how he gave people hope. As we accompany Jesus this week we will come to see him more clearly, just as St Paul came to see his true identity. We heard Paul in our second reading tell us that Jesus humbled himself and became obedient by accepting death on a cross, but God raised him on high. Paul then speaks of how we respond to that: every knee shall bend at the name of Jesus, and every tongue shall acclaim him as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This is a week to walk with Jesus on his journey through passion and death to resurrection. Let us also remember that as we journey with him, he also journeys with us. Wherever our life journey is taking us at this time, he is with us to support us, encourage us, and to show us the way. Let us encourage and support each other on that way.