

Palm Sunday
March 25, 2018
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Trinity Episcopal Church, Bend

Mark 11:1-11
Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 31:9-16
Philippians 2:1-11
Mark 14:43—15:47

There are certain occasions when a sermon is unnecessary. There are those who say that it's best on Palm Sunday to let the liturgy speak for itself. I heeded that advice ... after a fashion.

I don't typically preach a sermon, as such, on Palm Sunday. But I will offer a brief observation.

There was a march in downtown Bend yesterday. Inspired by students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, local students here in Bend were the leaders in an event they called "March For Our Lives." Hundreds of thousands rallied in Washington, D.C.; tens of thousands in major cities across the country; three or four thousand here in Bend. It was a peaceful march, a protest against the way the world works and a call for another way to be found.



In his Easter message from a couple of years ago, our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry offered a reflection that seems to echo something of the message from that march. Of course he wasn't talking about this weekend's marches, but I hear him saying the Way of Jesus in Holy Week is a "March For Our Lives." Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was peaceful. And his actions that week were both a protest against the way the world works and a call for us to find another way.

And so I'll share a bit of what he said to us then (and leave it to you to decide about the points of connection):

It's easy to dismiss ... this as naïve. Nice, but naïve. It's easy to dismiss it ... as a great hope, a wonderful ideal, but not realistic in a world like this. Maybe, parts of us I suspect wonder – maybe the strong do survive; maybe might does make right; maybe you better look out for number one. I suspect we all share those feelings once in a while.

But, I have to ask myself a question. It's not my question, it's Dr. Phil's, "How's that workin' out for ya?" How's that workin' out for the world?

The truth is, the way the world very often operates is not working out. It's not sustainable. It's not the way to life.

Jesus has shown us the way. He has shown us that unselfish, sacrificial love – love of God, and love of the other – is the way to life ...

When Jesus was executed, ... he willingly gave his life. Not for himself, but for others. And in so doing, he showed us what love looks like. That's what we call the Way of the Cross. And that Way is the way of life and hope ...

Three days later ... God raised him from the dead. And you could almost hear God thundering forth in that resurrection. Love, in the end, love wins! Love is the way!

All of which is to beg the question of whether either of these marches will make a difference in the end. And the short answer is that we who watch and participate are the only ones who can say, by the lives we live hereafter.

As St. Paul put it in our reading from Philippians this morning:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.

Or, as Michael Curry put it in his 2016 Easter Message:

So go forth into this world. Don't be afraid. And don't be ashamed to be people of love. And go forth into this world and help us to change it from the nightmare it often is into the dream that God intends.

A blessed Holy Week, a blessed Easter, and go forth into the world. Amen. ⁱ

ⁱ Michael Curry's Easter 2016 Message (slightly adapted for my reading) @ <http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2016/03/easter-message-from-presiding-bishop-michael-curry.aspx>.