

X TRINITY 2016

SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

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I COR. 12.1 ST. LUKE 19.41

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It's the first Palm Sunday and Jesus is getting ready to ride his donkey into Jerusalem. He looks over the city and cries...God cries...not for the city...but for its people.

Jesus goes on to predict the complete and total destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in 70 A.D. when the Roman Army sacked the city and destroyed the Temple.

"If you only knew today what is needed for peace...But now you cannot see it...not a single stone will they leave in its place, because you did not recognize the time God came to save you!"

Jesus cried for the people who were about to proclaim him to be their King and then turn around and reject him and kill him less than a week later. It's the failure of the people to recognize him for who he is that caused him to cry...for their missed opportunity.

When Jesus entered the city on the first Palm Sunday he went directly to the Temple. He did not like what he saw. He turned over tables and threw all the moneychangers and sellers out of the Temple. He quotes Isaiah and Jeremiah and charges them with turning God's house into a hideout for thieves.

Most of us would rather think about the Jesus gentle, meek and mild, little child of Bethlehem, surrounded by Mary and Joseph, shepherds, the Magi, singing Angels and an assortment of animals. We would rather not think about the Jesus who shows anger...of the Godly type. He's the same Jesus, on the first Christmas, the first Palm Sunday and now!

What set Jesus off was not the money-changing and selling going on in the Temple. That was the way things were done and part

of what it meant to serve God and serve the people. What set him off was their greed and unfair business practices, which prevented them from hearing or responding to anything he had to say. They had hijacked their religion to serve themselves.

Saint Paul faced his own challenges when he confronted some members of the Corinthian Church about their false teaching and fraudulent use of the gifts God had given them through the Holy Spirit. They had hijacked the parish to serve their own agenda and were openly critical and dismissive of other members of the parish.

Saint Paul founded the Corinthian Church...he had a vested interest in its spiritual health and welfare...he wanted to see them succeed. He wanted them not to miss out on opportunities to serve God using the gifts he gave them.

It's the same with us. Not all of us have the same gifts...together and used properly...they serve God and help build up the Parish. We should focus on the individual gifts God gives each of us to do our work...whatever those gifts are and however they show themselves...and not worry about or compare ourselves to others.

The connection between the Epistle and Gospel is the person of Jesus himself. We can talk about the moneychangers in the Temple and the Corinthians as if they are nothing more than figures in Holy Scripture. But, we need to see something of ourselves in both.

God equips each of us with the tools we need to do our work. We should always be satisfied with our work and not miss out on opportunities that come our way.

And let's always remember to thank God for the time he came to save us!

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