

X TRINITY 2019
SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY
I COR. 12.1 ST. LUKE 19.41



"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"!

Today's Gospel takes us back to the first Palm Sunday. Jesus is about to begin his ride on the donkey into Jerusalem. When he came closer to the city...he cried. Jesus cried! God cried!

Jesus cries for the people of the city who were about to proclaim him their King one day...and then turn against him and see him executed a week later. Jesus cries for the City whose name...*Jerusalem*...means *City of Peace*. Jesus cries for the city the Roman Army will destroy in 70 AD.

Jesus cries out in righteous anger when he enters the Temple courtyard. This is God's house turned into a hideout for thieves. God's house has been hijacked by greedy, self-serving people trying to get rich at the expense of others. They have forgotten they were supposed to be serving God and others.

Saint Paul faced his own challenges when he confronted some members of the Corinthian Church about their false teaching and disorder in the parish. Like the Jerusalem Temple, the some parishioners had hijacked the Corinthian Church. They openly criticized Paul and were dismissive toward others they thought were less spiritually gifted.

What we know as Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians is actually a follow-up to an earlier letter he wrote now lost. A parishioner quipped at a Discussion Group years ago, "About those Corinthians; did they ever write back?" They did...and they asked some tough questions.

The Corinthian Church was in a mess. Paul faced a congregation factionalized around rival leaders; torn apart by adultery and incest, embroiled in lawsuits and disordered worship. Paul was asked to help the Corinthian Church sort things out and restore order to the parish.

The underlying cause of the mess was a failure of the parishioners to relate to each other in love...and the church leader's failure to act compassionately but decisively to solve the problems. Douglas Campbell, professor of New Testament at Duke University, summed it up this way: "Some simple kindness would have helped (those Corinthians). They forgot the basic Christian ideal of "appropriate relating."

We're now 2000 years removed from the first Palm Sunday procession that welcomed and then turned against Jesus...and "those Corinthians" that caused Paul so much grief. But the Epistle and Gospel are ultimately for and about us. There is something of the first Palm Sunday crowd and "those Corinthians" in each of us. And the connection between them is the person of Jesus Christ himself...what do we make of him?

God's Holy Spirit equips each of us with the tools we need to do our work. Not all of us have the same gifts...we should be satisfied with the gifts God gives us...we shouldn't seek fame and glory.

Together and used properly our gifts serve God and help build up the Parish. We must always try to remember we are a community built on love for God and service to others.

When we leave this place today...we should thank God for sending Jesus to save us...and know the Peace of God is in our hearts...keeping us focused on love.

