

Christ Episcopal Church

2 Emerson Street

East Norwalk,

Connecticut 06855-1330

Palm Sunday – Passion Sunday (B)

March 25, 2018

DRAFT

8 AM and 10 AM homilies

by the Rev. Joe Parrish

“Waltzing in on a donkey”

The Palm Gospel according to

Mark 11:1-11a

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, ‘Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, “Why are you doing this?” just say this, “The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.”’ They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said

to them, ‘What are you doing, untying the colt?’ They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!’

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

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**The Passion Gospel according to
Mark 15:1-39**

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate.

Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” He answered him, “You say so.” Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, “Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.” But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed

murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, “Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” They

shouted back, “Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him!” So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns

into a crown, they put it on him.

And they began saluting him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to

the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by

derided him, shaking their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!” In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." Then

Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”

There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there

were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. When he

learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

Dear Lord, as you have loved us to the end, may we serve you to the end.
Amen.

In the early fifth century a Spanish nun by the name of Egeria made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and recorded the first eyewitness account of what happened on Palm Sunday:

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~mikef/durham/egetra.html>

Palm Sunday: Services in the Churches.

1.

Egeria's Diary Section XXX: On the next day, that is, the Lord's Day, which begins the Paschal week, and which they call here the Great Week, when all the customary services from cockcrow until morning have taken place in the Anastasis and at the Cross, they proceed on the morning of the Lord's Day according to custom to the greater church, which is called the martyrium. It is called the martyrium because it is in Golgotha behind the Cross, where the Lord suffered.

2. When all that is customary has been observed in the great church, and before the dismissal is made, the archdeacon lifts his voice and says first: "

Throughout the whole week, beginning from to-morrow, let us all assemble in the martyrrium, that is, in the great church, at the ninth hour." Then he lifts his voice again, saying: "Let us all be ready to-day in Eleona at the seventh hour."

3. So when the dismissal has been made in the great church! that is, the martyrium, the bishop is escorted with hymns to the Anastasis, and after all things that are customary on the Lord's Day have been done there, after the dismissal from the martyrium, every one hastens home to eat, that all may be ready at the beginning of the seventh hour in the church in Eleona, on the Mount of Olives, where is the cave in which the Lord was wont to teach.

Procession with Palms on the Mount of Olives.

Egeria's Diary Section XXXI:

Accordingly at the seventh hour all the people go up to the Mount of Olives, that is, to Eleona, and the bishop with them, to the church, where hymns and antiphons suitable to the day and to the place are said, and lessons in like manner. And when the ninth hour approaches they go up with hymns to the Imbomon, that is, to the place whence the Lord ascended into heaven, and there they sit down, for all the

people are always bidden to sit when the bishop is present; the deacons alone always stand. Hymns and antiphons suitable to the day and to the place are said, interspersed with lections and prayers.

2. And as the eleventh hour approaches, the passage from the Gospel is read, where the children, carrying branches and palms, met the Lord, saying; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, and the bishop immediately rises, and all the people with him, and

they all go on foot from the top of the Mount of Olives, all the people going before him with hymns and antiphons, answering one to another: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

3. And all the children in the neighborhood, even those who are too young to walk, are carried by their parents on their shoulders, all of them bearing branches, some of palms and some of olives, and thus the bishop is escorted in the same manner as the Lord was of old.

4. For all, even those of rank, both matrons and men, accompany the bishop all the way on foot in this manner, making these responses, from the top of the mount to the city, and thence through the whole city to the Anastasis, going very slowly lest the people should be wearied; and thus they arrive at the Anastasis at a late hour. And on arriving, although it is late, lucernare takes place, with prayer at the Cross; after which the people are dismissed.

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The observance of Palm Sunday in Jerusalem was witnessed by the pilgrim nun Sister Egeria in about 381-384. During this observance there was a procession of people down the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem. The people waved branches of palms or olive trees as they walked. They sang psalms, including Ps 118, and shouted the antiphon, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” The Palm Sunday observance was generally accepted throughout the Western church

by the twelfth century. However, the day was identified in the 1549 BCP as simply “The Sunday next before Easter.” The blessing of branches and the procession were not included. The 1928 BCP added the phrase “commonly called Palm Sunday” to the title of the day. A form for blessing palms was provided by the Book of Offices (in 1960). The 1979 BCP presents the full title for the day, “The Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday”. (BCP, p. 270).

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/glossary/palm-sunday-sunday-passion>

>>>>>Here is the brief Sunday homily:

My liturgy Professor at the General Seminary in 1985, Thomas Talley, summarized his research findings about the history of Palm and Passion Sunday as follow: Early on in the fourth and fifth centuries the Bishops of Jerusalem and perhaps even earlier, those local Jerusalem Bishops found they could get a good following of pilgrims and others in Holy Week by using the well-known features of the sacred and rebuilt city which related to the life of Jesus Christ. And in particular on Palm Sunday a

procession was made down from the Mount of Olives, through the Kidron Valley, the valley where Jerusalem's garbage was burned, and up to the site just outside the walls of ancient Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified; a sacred basilica had been erected at that holy place which covered both the Mount of Golgotha, the site of the crucifixion, and the Garden Tomb where the dead body of Jesus had been laid. These two important sites are only a few hundred feet apart, and both are still inside this ancient basilica, part of

which remains today in Jerusalem. This Eastern Church procession became known over time by the Bishop of Rome who had for many centuries observed only the Passion of Christ on the Sunday before Easter; since many Christian pilgrims did not come to church services on Good Friday, this Sunday of the Passion was to prepare them for the miraculous Resurrection on Easter morning.

After centuries of reports from the pilgrims who participated with the Patriarch of Jerusalem in the Palm

Sunday procession, the Patriarch of Rome, we now call him the Pope, in the twelfth century after his split with the Patriarch of Constantinople and the other Eastern bishops, the Patriarch of Rome saw fit to add this well-known Eastern Church Palm Sunday feature to his Western Church observance of Passion Sunday on the Sunday before Easter. But the Pope kept the enthusiastic Roman Palm Sunday procession at bay by making them stop outside the Roman cathedral and knock for entrance to the Holy Passion Sunday

service. Then the Palm Sunday revelers were calmed down and entered the very sedate Passion Sunday service inside the Roman cathedral. In time, both parts of Palm and Passion Sunday became united inside the cathedral. And over time the two services were observed inside the cathedral in a manner similar to how we do it in our church today.

Some churches will indeed have outdoor processions of Palms that then enter the church. Then the Palm Sunday Gospel is read, as we have read it just now, and the service continues with a few prayers

followed by the readings from the Passion, the Crucifixion, of Christ.

Thus, over several centuries this ‘two-headed’ liturgy was conceived, by popular request, if you will.

So, on this perhaps second most Holy Sunday, we hear the acclamations of those adoring Jesus with Hosannas--some perhaps thinking he had come only to throw off the bondage of Rome, and others hopeful that he was the long promised Messiah of God. The world itself is still of those two opinions, some thinking perhaps Jesus has come to save

them from the governments that be or ignoring Jesus, and others realizing through faith in him that the Son of God will save us from the time of trial and deliver us from all evil at the Last Day. The Church represents the latter group, and we hope and pray others will find their eternal hope in the One Who Died for Our Sins.

Amen.

<<<<<End of the brief homily

Description:

Jesus comes into Jerusalem in a lowly procession riding on a donkey on Palm Sunday, being adored by many expecting him to throw off the yoke of the Roman Empire. Then he leaves the city, regroups with his disciples, is arrested, and crucified on Good Friday. We now await remembering his rising from the dead on Easter morning.

Tags:

Egeria, nun, Spain, Patriarch, Rome,
Constantinople, Eastern Church,
Western Church, Palm, Sunday,
Passion, crucified, Mark, gospel,
Jerusalem, pilgrims, Pope, Golgotha,
crucifixion, Garden Tomb, procession,
Mount, Olives, Kidron, Valley, garbage,
burned, century, liturgy, basilica, Talley

St. Stephen's Episcopal ProCathedral

35 S. Franklin Street

Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania 18701

Palm Sunday:

The Sunday of the Passion (B)

March 29, 2015

“A thorn in his head”

A Sermon by the Rev. Joe Parrish

DRAFT

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ

according to Mark 14:32 - 15:39

Mark 14:32-72

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.” And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup

from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.”

He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. He came a third time and said to

them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.” So when he came, he went up

to him at once and said, “Rabbi!” and kissed him. Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to them, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.” All of them deserted him and fled.

A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.

They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled. Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire. Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. For many

gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree. Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’” But even on this point their testimony did not agree. Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?” But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the

Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

Jesus said, “I am; and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,’ and ‘coming with the clouds of heaven.’”

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?”

All of them condemned him as deserving death. Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophecy!” The guards also took him over and beat him.

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, “You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.” But he denied it, saying, “I do not know or understand what you are talking about.” And he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed. And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.” But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again

said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.” But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know this man you are talking about.” At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, “Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

Mark 15:1-39

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elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” He answered him, “You say so.” Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, “Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.” But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas

was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, “Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King

of the Jews?” They shouted back, “Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him!” So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown,

they put it on him. And they began saluting him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

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of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in

three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!” In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

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sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, “Listen, he is calling for Elijah.” And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.” Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his

last, he said, “Truly this man was God's Son!”

May we serve you to the end, Dear Lord, as you have loved us to the end.
Amen.

Some Sunday School children were asked at about this time of the year, “Who is God?” Various and sundry answers were given by the children, but one little girl held back, not saying anything. The teacher finally asked her, “Who do you think God is?” And she

reluctantly and softly said, “The one with the thorn in his head.” “The one with the thorn in his head.”

In a way this Sunday should be called ‘whiplash’ Sunday. People come to church in good spirits to get their palms, and then we spring on them the intricate details of the torture to death of the world’s Savior. It seems a poor way to get people to come back next Sunday to hear the really good news of the Resurrection of Christ!

If we turned in our Bibles three pages later after this story, we would see the

angel's annunciation of the birth of the Messiah to Mary in the beginning of the Gospel of Luke. It is indeed a time and place of contrasts.

The palms that were laid before Jesus as he entered the city of Jerusalem seem to echo the triumphal entry of the Maccabees into the Jerusalem Temple in 164 BC after they had cleansed it following its desecration by the Syrian ruler Antiochus Epiphanes as recorded in 2 Maccabees, Chapter 10. It was a show of how the skilled military might and determination of the Maccabees had

overcome the evil ruler. And here again it seems the fickle crowds were suggesting a reprise, a repeat, of that grand triumph of the Maccabees two centuries earlier, a rebellion now to be carried out, so they thought, by Jesus. However, Jesus rides in on the colt of a donkey perhaps trying to signify to them his intent was not military at all, since a military commander would surely come riding in on a war horse, a horse seasoned in battle. But Jesus is indeed the Prince of Peace, not a warlord, not a general, not a conquering king in the

earthly sense of the word. Jesus is coming into the Holy City to show how God will deal with humanity, not with military might, but with humble gentleness. Yet if one were to read on beyond the Palm Sunday Gospel in Mark, Chapter 11, the next day one would see Jesus casting a curse on an unproductive fig tree, and then pitching out the Temple merchants while overturning and scattering the foreign exchange booths and money managers there. Jesus was indeed purifying the Temple like the Maccabees did, but

without first defeating the invading Romans or having an army to back him up as the Maccabees did. Big problem! Jesus has now stirred up a hornet's nest, the Temple authorities, who were profiting from those money changers and animal dealers. To affect one's enemies' livelihood is to do the final act leading to arrest, on trumped up charges to be sure, but the Temple leaders had a good handle on the swords of the Roman legions. They knew how to play their cards, how to frame Jesus as a traitor to the Empire.

So Jesus suffers as an innocent one,
and is beaten and tortured to death,
being finally hung to suffocate on a
rough cross.

I am told the Quran of
Muhammadism does not allow for the
possibility of the crucifixion of Jesus.
Yet a myriad of pieces of evidence do
say he was so killed. The cross remains
the number one symbol of the universal
church. Even non-Christian historical
sources affirm such a death for Jesus.
Eyewitness accounts abound in the
gospels. And such a death was indeed

the method of choice for insurrectionists at that time and place, but crucifixion was finally repealed by the Romans nearly three centuries later as being too cruel, even for traitors.

Jesus was given a trial, but it was rigged from the beginning by the Jerusalem Temple authorities.

If one travels to the Holy Land one can see the possible dungeon where Jesus was held that night as the worldly religious powers plotted his death. They would encourage the Romans to release a scapegoat: Barabbas was apparently

the prisoner of note at that time. Pilate was not so happy with the alternative to Jesus Christ, as Barabbas was a known bandit and terrorist, a man who had led a bloody uprising against Rome. It seems a historical fact that dozens of rebel uprisings had occurred there over the past few years. And perhaps Pilate was recently appointed as Governor of Judea including Jerusalem to quell this unrest; over the next ten years Pilate would prove he was well up to the task, as his executions abounded. But to release a criminal like Barabbas was

quite a stretch even for Pilate, and Pilate tried unsuccessfully to overcome the jealousy of the Temple authorities to get Jesus released instead. Finally the temper of the crowd stirred up by the chief Temple priests forced Pilate's hand to throw Jesus to the wolves of the Roman guard who would beat Jesus nearly to death before he would be allowed to appear carrying his own cross. That Jesus died so quickly was probably the will of the guards who did not likely relish the suffering agony of the crucified, so their torture alone of

Jesus was nearly to his death. Today capital punishment is much more medical and sanitary--a needle of poisons, sudden spasms of the body, and the prisoner is dead. But in the first century, torture was a long and grand public spectacle, likely because of an imagined deterrent effect against other criminals and terrorists; but of course that didn't work any better in the first century than it does in the twenty-first. The martyrdom syndrome is more powerful by far than execution.

The death of our Lord was the height of folly in the thinking of the executioners. That we humans could keep the dead Son of God closed up forever in a stone tomb was ridiculous; it didn't hold three days, and out he came, alive again. What is perhaps more amazing was that no fire from heaven descended on the crucifixion spot to kill all those responsible for the unfair execution of the one completely innocent person, but of course that heat is reserved for a more propitious time such as on the Day of Judgment when

all hope of redemption is gone for those who have not followed the Christ and his way.

It took a burley Roman centurion to affirm what had been done, that humans had killed the true Son of God. Others being hung on crosses would curse their death with their last breath, but Jesus only cries to his Heavenly Father in his aloneness on that cruel instrument of torture.

‘Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Oh, oh, oh,

sometimes it causes me to tremble,
tremble, tremble. Were you there when
they crucified my Lord?’

Now is not the time to tremble. Now
is the time to set our lives in order, to
give up those things as individuals and
as a community that cause innocent
people to suffer and die. Maybe it is not
ignoring the suffering of the homeless
who live in tents by the Wilkes-Barre
train tracks or anywhere else, or by not
protesting public policies that do not
further the strengthening of human life
and welfare. Maybe it is in our own

homes where we do not show love and compassion for our spouses or our children or our relatives or our neighbors or even for our enemies.

We too need to have the innocent protected, but indeed we too need to protect ourselves from the coming judgment like that reserved for those who were responsible for killing the Son of God, who perhaps found no more time at their own end to repent and turn their lives to the Living and True God.

Holy Week begins today. It may be the last time we hear the call to turn

back and follow Christ. What is our decision? Will we seek the face of the Lord now? Will we follow him the rest of our life? Will we find the offering of his life has substituted for our sins at the Last Day? I hope and pray so.

Amen.