

Who Will See the King?

A Series of Palm Sunday Monologues

Note:

Palm Sunday is the start of Holy Week – the critical juncture between cries of “Hosanna” and shouts of “Crucify.” With this service we feel the increasing tension as Good Friday is around the corner – and almost seems impossible given the street celebration we witness today. These paradoxical dynamics are within us still – even this side of Easter. So often our ‘Palm Sundays’ give way to ‘dark Fridays’ and we must learn again and again to keep our Fridays open to the possibility of Easter – a resurrection cycle that’s sometimes hard to see.

This series of monologues is best done in succession, by the same actor or different actors, with short musical interludes between each. A simple costume change (on stage by the one actor – suggestions included) is enough to change the scene.

The first monologue is participatory. The actor speaks one line and the congregation repeats it together – with similar tone, volume, inflexion and gesture.

Preceding Hymn:

Hymnal Worship Book 20 Come and See

An Unusual Parade

Wanna see Jesus?

I do, too!

C’mon, bring your jacket

Grab a coat

Snatch a palm

Line the way!

I can’t see!

Where is he?

Do you have binoculars?

C’mon, lift me up!

Above this crowd

This crowd

One person in a crowd

Where will he be?

How will he enter?

How will he come?

How will he stride into Jerusalem?

A horse

Yes!

A white horse

A parade

A military march

A 21-gun salute!

Yes!

A political campaign

Convention

A coronation

How shall we address you, prime minister?

Yes!

A concert tour

Sports event

A rally

Come, let us bow before our hero, our star!

But, where is he?

The crowd disperses

Leaves

Like he's come and gone

No horse

No limousine

No paparazzi

How did I miss him?

How did I not see his face?

Instrumental Interlude:

eg. *Hymnal Worship Book* 144 Kyrie eleison

The Doubter

(wears black cloth as a bandanna)

I had good intentions of seeing Jesus that day. But I wasn't looking for a donkey.

There's no shame in shouting hosanna. But, tell me, is a colt-rider capable of saving anything?

Let me back up a bit.

Under normal circumstances I might have been a follower. Had there been less "turn the other cheek" nonsense and more brawn. Less hockey, more fight, if you know what I mean.

What's wrong with a bit of redemptive violence – when it is justified?

I never understood him.

Praising the woman who anoints his feet. Equating love with a father who hugs a prodigal.

Identifying God as a mother hen.

Shameful.

Why had there been so little mention of glory? Triumph? Or victory?

Instrumental Interlude:

eg. *Hymnal Worship Book* 144 Kyrie eleison

The Leader

(wears black cloth as a stole)

I saw Jesus that day.

The nerve of a... Galilean – I can hardly spit out the word. A Nazarene, no less – to ride a donkey – under the auspices of peace – only to stir up conflict.

Unequivocal provocation!

Why incite the masses with false ideological arguments that serve only to create controversy:
accusing the money changers of injustice,
assuming authority above our leadership,
avoiding questions of substance,
accusing us of shamefully accepting honor at the expense of the poor.

Does he know with whom he is speaking?

Does he have any idea by what authority we act?

Does he know we're on the side of God?

High time to end this disturbance and silence the rebel – once and for all.

Instrumental Interlude:

eg. *Hymnal Worship Book* 144 Kyrie eleison

The Crowd Enthusiast

(wears black cloth as a scarf)

What a party! The weather. Atmosphere. Great community spirit.

Who doesn't love a parade?

And the excitement. Pandemonium! Woodstock all over again.
One of those historic-type moments.

Not that I expected to meet him. 100, 200,000 people. What's the chance I'd see the superstar?

But it was on my mind... you know, something I could maybe tell my grandkids – "I was
there. I saw him."

And I did – he walked right in front of me. I almost touched him.

Kind of embarrassing – my infatuation for the guy – like I sort of loved him. In a way.

Hey, Jesus... can I have your autograph?

Instrumental Interlude:

eg. *Hymnal Worship Book* 144 Kyrie eleison

The Observer

(wears black cloth as a sash)

I had no problem loaning him my donkey. But I was curious, so watched from the back row – and took a few notes.

Overall, I have to say, the street theater was quite impressive. Well orchestrated. Well choreographed. Exceptional crowd control, given it was Passover and standing room only. And the branches – wow – they raised the crowd’s energy exponentially. March madness.

Pretty strategic, too, to enter the city from the Mount of Olives, and stage the whole thing from the traditional site of Jerusalem’s final battle.

“A+” I’d say.

Give credit to his communications team – to be able to stir up a carnival from the back of a donkey. And manage in that one moment to lampoon the whole system.

Ingenious.

Rick Mercer couldn’t have done it any better!

Instrumental Interlude:

eg. *Hymnal Worship Book* 144 Kyrie eleison

The Faithful Widow

(wears black cloth as a head covering)

I went to the parade empty handed not able to afford the concession price for a palm. 2 branches for a buck! I only had two copper coins. And they were for the treasury.

I don’t necessarily care for the pomp and ceremony, anyway. Never have. What did we use to call it – “splash and dash.” Get emotionally high, then disappear.

No, I was interested in him.

I had heard him speak before – you know, of mustard seeds and pearls, lost coins and hidden treasures.

He speaks in parables – gets you thinking.

Today I hoped to hear a parable again.

But he didn't speak, today, in words. His actions were a parable.

I'm old enough to know that actions speak louder than words, anyway.

And that's why I followed him – silently.

And stayed with him – even after the crowd had gone. I was the only one.

Perhaps those who look for horses can't see a donkey. Those who have power can't see his authority. Those who love the crowd's energy can't see what all the fuss's about. Those who watch from a distance never really get involved.

I don't know. That day I was the only one.

And I saw him weep.

On a hilltop overlooking the city.

Weeping.

Praying for us, I guess.

Praying for us – the political observer, the superficial lover, the power broker and the unbeliever.

Praying for us – because we have such a hard time seeing.

That night I prayed for him.

And I left my 2 coins – all that I have – trusting actions are louder than words.

Trusting, in time, there will be more – enough – after the tears have been shed.

Yeah, I'm old enough to know that God is found in strange places – even on a donkey.

Hymn of Response:

Hymnal Worship Book 571 Tis not with eyes of flesh

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