

What Part Do You Play? (Deacon Jim's Homily for Palm Sunday)

Every year on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, we are all asked to step into the parts of the Gospel narrative that we know as "The Passion".

I don't know how the Passion narrative affects you, but each year I take some time to think about what is truly happening and how each of the people associated with the Gospel are reacting to this event.

I want you to think this year about the crowd, which all of us are asked to participate in during the procession into the church and the Gospel. Did you ever stop to think about how that crowd can change so fast? How we can go from walking into church singing Hosanna in the Highest to a few minutes later, yelling crucify him!

Do we do that in our lives today? Unfortunately, I have seen many instances where the parts of the Passion have played out in my ministerial experience.

If you don't understand how a crowd can change quickly, I would suggest that you offer to officiate a sports game. In a recent WIAA basketball tournament in our area, I went from an official that was being praised by the fans and a coach for making great calls, to being screamed at for a different call in a matter of minutes.

I share with you a story about a young lady who went on Catholic mission trips with her church and offered to walk on the 40 Days for Life in the Spring of her senior year of high school supporting life. That fall, after she entered college, I saw a picture of her toting a sign that said "My body, My choice" at an abortion rally. How quick we can change when we hang around a crowd.

Maybe we are more like Pontius Pilate, a true politician. We say the right words about our faith and act accordingly when it is in our best interest, but we change our ways when we are put on the spot and challenged on the church's teachings. How many of us always stand for the truth, even when we know it might mean losing our job or being uncomfortable?

Maybe we are more like the Apostles—more like Peter. When the going gets a little challenged do we say, yes I am Catholic but I don't want to be acknowledged as a Catholic who is all in for my faith.

Do we abandon people sometimes as the Apostles abandoned Christ? There was a lady in Kaukauna last year that shared with me that even though she was so involved with the church in many ways, that when she was going through cancer treatments a few years ago that not one person even contacted her or reached out. She felt very abandoned by her parish family. Doesn't it say in the scripture that "Whatever you did for the least of my brethren, you did it for me?"

Are we like the Centurian and good thief? Do we have to witness something major and traumatic before we believe? We know that many people even must witness a life after death experience for them to come to the faith.

Yes, each year we are asked to take part in the Passion of Christ. What part did you play this year?

God Bless—Deacon Jim