

Readings: Isaiah 50:4-7; Psalm 22; Phil. 2:6-11; Mark 14:1-15:47]

In his book, *A Spirituality of Waiting*, Fr. Henri Nouwen writes about “Waiting for the Passion” and “the Passion of Waiting.” He says, “In the passion and resurrection of Jesus we see God as a waiting God.... In a way, [Jesus’] agony is not simply the agony of approaching death. It is also the agony of having to wait. It is the agony of a God who depends on us for how God is going to live out the divine presence among us. It is the agony of the God who, in a very mysterious way, allows us to decide how God will be God.

“All action ends in passion because the response to our action is out of our hands. That is the mystery of friendship, the mystery of community – they always involve waiting. And that is the mystery of Jesus’ love.”

How is it that today we are still waiting for the Passion? That each year the Church in her goodness gives us a season of self-emptying to be filled with something greater; a season of joy grounded in trust, of hope in the promise of the Resurrection – the season of Lent? We wait because God is ever new.

Each Mass we are present at Calvary. Each Easter Triduum we are no less mysteriously, but TRULY present at Jesus’ Passion. His Sacrifice of love has not changed, but we have. As we enter into Holy Week, He waits for us. Waits for our trust, for our invitation for Him to act, to be present at *this* moment, at *this* time in our lives.

Every day we participate in our own small way in the Paschal Mystery: The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ. To the extent we allow ourselves to be present to these little “passions,” dying to ourselves in hidden ways, so to the extent we share in the joy of the Resurrection.

Today is Palm Sunday and still we are haunted by those ambiguous feelings which have to do with triumph and tragedy, victory and defeat, honor and dishonor. Today is Palm Sunday and we remember, "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Today is Palm Sunday and there's a crowd of people out there lining the street to welcome this Jesus to be King of Jews.

Today is Palm Sunday and Jesus comes riding in on some young donkey like the old kings of Israel centuries before as they entered the Holy City. Today is Palm Sunday and some little boy who lives out in the country is the first one to come running barefoot into town to tell us the news, "The King is coming!" Jesus is coming down the road to Jerusalem. Today is Palm Sunday and the king is coming. The king is coming and no one can remain neutral. The king is coming and someone must decide.

The king is coming and you must make up your mind about Him. The king is coming and we can no longer remain the same -- "something's gotta give." Something has to change in our way of thinking. Something has to be different about our loyalties. Something has to be renewed about our commitment. It confronts us always with a choice, for always this King is coming to our city, in our place and time, for over and over again we are Jerusalem. So on this Palm Sunday, I want to remind us of what is before us today.

If we want to be just bystanders -- parade watchers: palm waving, flag waving Christians who go home after the parade and forget it, then we can do just that. Drop in our envelope, have a good feeling, be at ease and let the world go to hell. But, if you are serious about this Jesus stuff, if you want to be a participant, then you had better watch out and prepare yourself and get ready.

One friend wrote to another friend: "Waiting is active, patiently present, open-ended, hoping in a promise, lived in community this is it! God grant me faith, hope and love in the waiting." As we enter into Holy Week, may we choose the way of quiet confidence. In the midst of apparent defeat, hopes seemingly unrealized, or work left undone -- we wait with Mary and the Apostle John at the foot of the cross. Let us respond to Jesus' Passion -- His sacrificial suffering -- with trust and invitation, certain that our little offerings, even our greatest agonies, when truly offered to Him will lead to our joy in the glory of the Resurrection. AMEN!