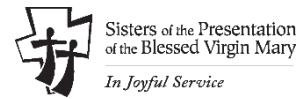


2021 Lenten Reflections



March 28, 2021~Palm Sunday

"We were hoping that he was the one who would set Israel free."

The crowd was huge, says Matthew, of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. His welcome by the people stop just short of naming him the Messiah. Matthew later states that the whole city was stirred to its depths.

Zechariah writes that the Messiah will come, not as a conquering warrior on a horse, but humbly seated on an ass. Zechariah prophesies that his dominion will be from sea to sea. He shall sound the trumpet and come in a storm to save his people. There are many warlike verses that no doubt contributed to the belief of the people that Jesus' role was like that of David and other warrior kings in their history. The people had already decided who this Messiah would be. The leaders became even more afraid when they saw the worship given to Jesus on his triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

In hearing the Scripture of prophets like Zechariah proclaimed in their synagogues, the people could easily believe that the savior would come as a conqueror. On the other hand, if they had really listened to Jesus' message as he spoke to them, they would know his kingdom was not a worldly kingdom. Even his followers did not understand him. When Jesus told his followers of his coming death and all he must suffer, perhaps the mental anguish of his perceived failure was as great as the bodily suffering in his agony and death on the cross. In his humanity would it not be a great mental suffering for Jesus to be acclaimed the promised one of God and then rejected by the people to become an apparent failure? It must have seemed that everything he taught and the life he lived were for nothing. It brings extreme suffering to anyone who is judged to be a failure in life.

It is a great lesson for us. We can never judge anyone to be a failure in this life. We have only to look at Jesus as he walked with two of his followers on the road to Emmaus and they said to him: "We were hoping that he was the one who would set Israel free."

Sr. Gabriella Crowley, PBVM