

SUNDAY APRIL 5

World Day of Youth

Passion (Palm) Sunday

THE LORD'S PASSION and death could lose its power in our liturgy because of its repetition. We can easily "drift off," for we know how the story will end. There are ways to keep the story alive for us, however. One way is to reflect on the Passion in the light of the other two readings.

Today's passage from Isaiah presents a faithful believer who, like Jesus, encountered opposition when he tried to bring God's word to his own community. Throughout history people have suffered and even died for their commitment to God. This happened long before Jesus and continues to this day. Some Christians still give their very lives as martyrs, literally as "witnesses" to the faith.

The second reading is an ancient hymn reflecting on the significance of Jesus' saving action for us. The crucifixion is the end of a process of "emptying" that began with Jesus' birth and continued through his entire life. His willingness to die for us is rooted in his willingness to become one of us for our salvation.

As we remember Jesus' sacrifice, let us reflect on the great love his death expresses, and how we are all called to empty ourselves as Jesus did, giving of ourselves for the sake of others. What does it really mean for me to take up the cross and follow Jesus?

John L. McLaughlin

People and Prayers to Remember this Week

Readings of the Day

Matthew 21.1-11 (Procession)

Isaiah 50.4-7

Psalm 22

Philippians 2.6-11

Matthew 26.14 – 27.66

Responding to the Word

God's servants endure much for God's sake. What suffering has been most challenging for me to accept recently?

Final Thoughts ...
