

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Mar 22nd 2016

Through this week's readings, from Palm Sunday through Holy Week to Easter, we have both the advantage and the challenge of knowing how the story ends. We know Easter is coming. The Gospel today, however, reminds us that as the disciples were with Jesus in these last days, there was a lot of secrecy and confusion; it is clear that the disciples did not understand what was happening. I imagine the question, "What lies ahead?" had to be at the forefront in many of the disciples' minds. And of course, we all have that question. It can be hard to enter the mindset of the disciples in this story because we know how things play out. It becomes easier, though, when we connect the story to our own lives and the fact that we don't know what the future holds, either. What is key here, I think, is how we approach that unknown future.

Part of the confusion for the disciples had to come from the fact that they thought they had an idea of how things were supposed to go, and it almost certainly didn't include one of these close companions betraying the one they were following. When Jesus said that one of them would betray him, they couldn't accept or understand it because it didn't fit with what they wanted or expected.

I think this is also the problem Peter runs into. He does not know what Jesus' path entails and is so locked into his own vision of the path ahead that he can't accept or be in the situation that presents itself. Peter says he will lay down his life, but Jesus is not so sure. Again, that is probably because Peter doesn't actually know what he is saying. He is being challenged to surrender his own ideas about how things are supposed to go, to let go of his self-centeredness and self-pitying, but he is either unaware or unwilling to do it. He finds himself so unnerved at not seeing things play out the way he wants them to, he completely turns away from Jesus and denies ever knowing him.

This is our lesson today. We often don't know where things are going or what lies ahead, and our lives will inevitably contain disappointments, losses, and betrayals. But if we are able to move away from having such strong attachments to how things "should be," we'll be able to realize that remaining faithful disciples and following the example of Jesus (humility, patience, compassion, courage) is how we can face whatever lies ahead in life's uncertainties and unexpected turns.

Click on the link below to send an e-mail response

Craig Zimmer-Creighton University's Campus Ministry