

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster
Sunday, March 24th, 2024, Palm Sunday
Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, Philippians 2:5-1, Mark 11:1-11

Whenever there is an election of a Bishop there is always thoughts about who will let their name stand. All of us a priests think about it wonder about being Bishop. A colleague captured the essence of the reality of our playing with the idea. That all of us would like to be Bishop for a day, but beyond that, to deal with the problems and stresses of the position day in and day out for years is not what we want. So, who would want to do so?

And today: *Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.* This unfolds in a few ways. -All of us come in the name of the Lord, meaning we are not coming on our own which is both good news and bad. The good news is that we are coming with the Lord, and even if alone are not alone entirely. And the challenge is that we are not coming so much in our own name but in the name of the Lord, so the focus is on God in Christ and not ourselves. This calls for humility otherwise we forget the who and why and get caught seeing ourselves in the central role and our ego gets in the way. And just like being Bishop, it is not just for a day but an ongoing situation and sense of our relationship with God and our place in the community.

This reminds me of a phrase: We are not called to be successful because the successes belong to God, we are called to be faithful.

Does this mean we can only take the blame and not feel good about the successes?
No.

It is never quite that simple. We can feel good about our successes and the part we play in it, not the whole but in context with the part with God as co-creators.

And with blame there is forgiveness. In Isaiah: *It is the Lord who helps me, who will find me guilty?*

We also come bringing a variety of gifts as explained in 1 Corinthians 12:
But we in the church don't seem to be able to recognize the different gifts which bring the community together. We tend to want to simplify and focus on certain aspects of ministry and service.

The Henry Ford comment comes to mind; you can have any colour of car you want as long as its black.

It is the lord who helps me. The thought is that it makes no claim on the behavior of others, and at times my faith includes others, but sometimes I have the feeling their faith does not include me.

And in Philippians the sense of emptying for God and each other, finding out who we are and what gives us true meaning.

The servant, but to whom? In relationship. Who or what we are serving, that we cannot serve two masters. Matthew 6:24

And let us not forget that Jesus did not come riding on a war horse but a donkey.

This got me thinking that it may be difficult for Alphas to believe in the God of Jesus Christ. To give up control and being the centre of their universe. And those aspiring to be alphas. Thus, the starting point, what do we want to believe and understand ourselves to be?

They can be very helpful and care for those in need, but can they relate to them? The war horse than the donkey, about Easter than Good Friday, about success than failure. But there is always the question about our definition of success.

On the other side, there is the comment, so heavenly minded, no earthly good. So, some kind of balance and what does it mean to find value and meaning? Not surprising, this is about discernment and where the Spirit is leading.

The balance both Good Friday and Easter. And those who have trouble believing are on both sides. Those who only see Easter and those who only see the bad news of Good Friday in their lives.

The passage which comes to mind is the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. Luke 18:9-14. Both stay away from God and others.

Today, let us recognize and remember with the palm crosses, that we have a part to play and continue to play in the phrases for today.

*It is the Lord who helps me, who will find me guilty?
And Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.*

Amen.

May the God who shakes heaven and earth,
whose Spirit blows through the valleys and the hills;
whom death could not contain and
who lives to disturb and bring us life;
bless us with the power to endure,
to hope and to love. Amen.

(Source: [*Elizabeth Raine*](#))