

“Holy Week” – Rev. Jennifer Adams
Palm Sunday – C, 03/28/10

One of the beautiful things about Holy Week for me is that as mysterious as all the happenings are, as theologically dense and deep and wide as the themes of this week can be – there’s almost no way to avoid being a part of it, if you’re here. And we encourage your participating in as much of Holy Week as you possibly can, because this is the week where you see it all. The week that sets the tone, lays the foundation for all the rest. And if you’re here, it’s nearly impossible to avoid getting swept up into the heart of it all.

Now there are Sundays I know, for most of us anyway, weeks when we check out for a minute or two here and there in the pews; Sundays when we’re here but not here and it takes an elbow from the person sitting next to us to make us present. But it’s hard not to be present, physically, emotionally, mentally when you’re processing around on neighborhood sidewalks waving palms in the air; it’s hard to not actually notice when water is being poured over your foot or you’re eating some bread, drinking some wine or watching an actual large wooden cross process down the aisle; it’s hard to not at least participate on a level that you might not always touch when you’re carrying a candle in the darkness or ringing bells while the whole place is shining and erupting in one long-awaited Alleluia. The very simple physical actions and very real things that we do during Holy Week which invite us into the story in ways that shape us not only this week but always. As complicated as all of this can seem, there are simple pieces too and those simple pieces invite our presence and through our presence the story comes to life in us.

This is God come to us. God with us. God on a donkey. God serving us and dining with us. Good as bread and wine. God dying for us and rising to new life with us. And it could easily be too big for us to touch. But at the same time, part of the miracle of Holy Week is that these are our voices. Our hands. Our feet. Our steps. Our bread. This is our chewing and swallowing and serving. These are our prayers, our tears, our candles, our bells that bring the story here and now and the grace is that maybe like no other week we are immersed.

And all of that is the truth, the purpose of Holy Week. As complicated as the theological themes of the week can be, God chose very simple, accessible ways in which to be present to us. We can wave. We have feet. We make bread. We have wine. We know death. We have tears. We know darkness and can light a fire. And somewhere deep inside of each of us is the desire to sing Alleluia!

So I invite you this week to use the actions of this week to challenge you beyond mere observation into faithful participation. Take off a sock on Thursday. Kneel and wonder or cry on Friday. Help us light the fire, carry a candle and ring bells on Sunday morning. And know where the Alleluia lives in you. Those are simple things really, but that’s part of the point of this week. The miracle is not only what God did in terms of being among us and living and dying for us. The miracle is not only what God did but how God did it. God did it through things and actions within our reach. We have feet. We have water. We can wash. We have bread. We have wine. We can eat. We have a cross, we have tears and we’ve seen death. We experience

darkness and light every day. We can light a fire, hold a candle and if we do our work this week we might even know where the alleluia is truly alive inside of us.

Consider Holy Week the divine elbow nudging all of us into a new level of awareness and presence. Know that miracles are happening even here and now. And the miracles are about meals and service and life and death and new life. And they are happening through you and through me and with God.

Amen.