

Who Is this Man?

He is a convicted criminal. He is a threat to the sovereignty of Rome, because he might be a rival king; a challenge to Jewish religious tradition, for he interprets the law by his own authority. Still, he is just a common carpenter; a sometimes preacher and healer like many others; a man whose friends and followers have deserted him and are in hiding. At least this is how some might describe Jesus. But we know better.

He fits well the Isaian image—a man with “a well-trained tongue” who knows “how to answer the weary” (Isaiah 50:4). He also resembles the Psalm 22 sketch of one to scoff at and mock, one whose hands and feet are pierced, an image also found in the Gospel account of his suffering and death. This is a man rejected, beaten, and nailed to wood like a piece of flimsy material. Who is this man and why was he so hated?

The hymn in Philippians 2 probably offers the best likeness of him. He was in the form of God, but out of love for others he took on the form of a slave so that he might serve them. What about this was so objectionable? Does he represent an idea of God that is too different from the one with which we have grown comfortable? As a man for others, does he put our own selfishness to shame? Does his desire to serve challenge our propensity to control? Is this why he has been rejected?

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR *Reflection*

- ★ What does Jesus' self-emptying tell us about God?
- ★ How would your world change if you chose to serve others rather than control them?



He emptied himself, taking the form of a slave [and]... humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

PHILIPPIANS 2:7-8

Dear Padre,

How can I use Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to find spiritual meaning for myself during Holy Week?

The Gospel tells us that Jesus goes to Jerusalem knowing he will suffer and die there. Jerusalem is the place where prophets have been killed in the past (Matthew 23:37). Jesus predicts his passion in the Gospel of Matthew three times (Matthew 16:21, 17:22, and 20:17). Jesus, the one sent by God, will meet the same fate as the prophets who had been sent by God to call Jerusalem to conversion. He goes to Jerusalem as a prophet, to preach God's saving word to the very people who will turn on the messenger.



Jesus isn't fooled by the enthusiastic crowd of people who throw him a welcome party and refer to him as the prophet coming in God's name. He tells them that he comes in humility, as the prophet foretold: "Your king comes to you, meek and riding on an ass" (Matthew 21:5).

He challenges their expectations by referencing the prophet Zechariah's humble

king. In the second reading we hear a hymn to Jesus' humility, which praises his willingness to give of himself, even unto death.

Jesus' hopes aren't based on the crowd's emotions. He has chosen to obey his Father's will, and if that obedience leads him to the place where prophets have gone before him, so be it. He is ready to suffer and die. We need Jesus' example and grace to remain faithful in the face of flattery, scorn, and threat. Live this week seeking to have the mind of Christ, to live his humility.

—Fr. Timothy McCanna
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A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

Jesus enters Jerusalem. The liturgy...somehow expresses the contradictory feelings that we too, the men and women of today, experience: the capacity for great love, but also for great hatred; the capacity for courageous self-sacrifice, but also the ability to "wash our hands" at the right moment.

—PALM SUNDAY HOMILY, MARCH 25, 2018

Calendar

Monday

APRIL 6

Monday of Holy Week

Is 42:1-7

Jn 12:1-11

Tuesday

APRIL 7

Tuesday of Holy Week

Is 49:1-6

Jn 13:21-33, 36-38

Wednesday

APRIL 8

Wednesday of Holy Week

Is 50:4-9a

Mt 26:14-25

Thursday

APRIL 9

Holy Thursday

Ex 12:1-8, 11-14

1 Cor 11:23-26

Jn 13:1-15

Friday

APRIL 10

Good Friday

Is 52:13-53:12

Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9

Jn 18:1-19:42

Saturday

APRIL 11

Holy Saturday

Gn 1:1-2:2 or 1:1,

26-31a

Gn 22:1-18 or Gn 22:1-2,

9a, 10-13, 15-18

Ex 14:15-15:1

Is 54:5-14 / Is 55:1-11

Bar 3:9-15, 32-4:4

Ez 36:16-17a, 18-28

Rom 6:3-11

Mt 28:1-10

Sunday

APRIL 12

Easter

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Col 3:1-4 or 1 Cor 5:6b-8

Jn 20:1-9 or Mt 28:1-10

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