

The Palms of Passion are Difficult to Hold...

Matthew 21:8-11

A few years back at a church I was serving in Sebring, Florida the congregation decided to save a little money on Palm Sunday. Instead of purchasing their palms from the local florist they decided to cut some palmetto branches to bring to the service. As the service began, and the opening hymn sung, everyone lifted their branches into the air and began waving them. As soon as the palms were lifted many screams of pain could be heard throughout the sanctuary. The group who cut the palms had forgotten to remove the serrated edges of the palm branches. Upon lifting the branches into the air to wave the serrated edges of the palm branches were cutting into people hands. Many of the palms that morning were quickly dropped!

How quickly the palms are dropped when the Gospel is lived before the world. For the Good News, which comes to us through Jesus the Christ, is liberation from powers and principalities of this world. A liberation that does not come easily and is not bound up in the pageantry of wealth and prosperity. The triumphal entry of Jesus is not a celebration of his Lordship but actually the beginning of his abandonment. For the further Jesus journey's into Jerusalem the closer he comes to the cross and the cross just might be the last thing people want to experience. Along that journey to the cross the palms of praise are dropped and the people return to their ordinary lives pretending that liberation from darkness and sin couldn't possibly cost that much!

Yet, even in the moments of abandonment Jesus the Christ continues to journey on our behalf. Making the way of liberation possible for us all! Setting the example of what it means to be in genuine relationship and love for all of God's creation and people. For it is only through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ that the palms of passion can be waved. Jesus is the first to carry successfully the palms of passion which cut deep into the hands of the world. He bares these marks on his hands. Hands that have been hardened for they toil for the least, the lost and the broken.