

Faith and Fair Food

L e c t i o n a r y C o m m e n t a r y

**Sixth Sunday in Lent, April 1, 2007
Palm/Passion Sunday**

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Lectionary Readings

Liturgy of the Palms

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Luke 19:28-40

Liturgy of the Passion

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16

Philippians 2:5-11

Luke 22:14-23:56

This Sunday's lectionary is a split reading, and I don't much like it. I have always known this as Palm Sunday, with all the palm waving and shouting that entails. And I love it that way.

But if you only go to church on Sundays, you will miss any mention of Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion in our liturgical calendar. You go from Palm Sunday palms straight to Easter Sunday lilies. So this Sunday, we have dual readings, one from the traditional Liturgy of the Palms, and one from the Liturgy of the Passion.

And as much as I may wish this didn't happen, I think it is a good, faithful way for us to follow this story. I often want to go from the Hosannas! of Palm Sunday to the Christ is Risen! of Easter Sunday. That's what I want, but that is not how this world works.

I remember her face well. She was at the counter, in the Food Court close to the church I was working with at the time. She was probably paid close to minimum wage. She really could not understand my excitement at ordering my usual meal (Deal #5, I believe, 2 Gorditas and a taco...), but she didn't know how long I had been waiting for it. I tried to explain that I was breaking a sacred fast, a fast of justice and solidarity, of tomatoes and Taco Bell – but that's a hard message to register standing in the checkout line. She wanted to take the next order, but I wanted to celebrate God's righteousness with her.

In Luke, we said "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven!"

At the counter in Taco Bell, I said

"Blessed are those who labor in God's vineyards!"

We see heaven in a more justly paid bucket of tomatoes!”

In 2005, we shared in a taste of God’s Kin-dom, in a glimpse of the Reign, in shouts of God’s glory. The whole of God’s vision it was not, but the one cent more per pound for the Coalition of Immokalee Workers gave us a taste of the world we sing about on the glorious Sunday of Palms...

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord...

The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone...

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!

And just at the height of that celebration, we turn to the Passion.

Just as the taste of God’s Kin-dom fills our mouths, we realize our hungry and burning bellies that cry out for the fullness of God’s justice. Just as we celebrate a penny more, we recognize how far we are from a world that values and respects all work, all workers, and the dignity of each Child of God. As Jesus’ triumphal entry turns into a public shame walk, we realize just how far we are from the way of living he offers us.

From the joy of the Taco Bell victory, we turn to the daunting work at hand. Burger King dodges the truth, McDonald’s refuses to work with the CIW. The first step has been taken, but it looks to be a long, long journey. There are crosses that still have power in our world today.

Just as the shouts of Hosanna blended into the cries for Jesus’ death, we recognize that our own cries for God’s justice meld into our own sinful work against that world God is constructing. We participate in the networks that make workers anonymous, silent, invisible, expendable. We are apathetic in the face of our culture of ease, desire, and consumption. We don’t recognize our call to live as Jesus did, as a testament against the de-human-izing powers of city, government, culture, and religion all around us.

I look forward to and have hope in a check out line someday in the future, when I shout Hosanna! to a McDonalds worker and celebrate another step on the walk toward God’s Kin-dom. That is a faith-filled hope, but it does not come through me, or us, or this world. It begins as we start walking through this week, with the CIW, with the outcast and sinners of this world, with all those who struggle for redemption, toward Jerusalem.

And our Passion reading ends:

At noon, the light of the land was blotted out, the curtain was torn in two, and one man breathed his last breath.

La lucha continua. The struggle continues.

Learn More and Take Action!

Learn about how the CIW agreement with Yum! Brands, Taco Bell’s parent company, almost doubled workers’ wages, guaranteed transparency in Taco Bell’s tomato supply chain, and made the workers’ partners in the creation and monitoring of a strong Code of Conduct. Visit <http://www.ciw-online.org/agreementanalysis.html> .

Join the CIW and their allies from the faith, student and human rights communities April 13th at McDonald's Headquarters in Oak Brook, IL and April 14th for a Fair Food Parade in downtown Chicago. Learn more about these two days of action as well as the entire "McDonald's Truth Tour 2007: Behind the Golden Arches" at www.ciw-online.org