



# The Inclusive Community

**Palm Sunday**

**March 28, 2010**

**Faithfulness**

**Matthew 7: 11-54**

**Homily of Rev. Dr. Anthony T. Padovano**

It may not be too much to say that the week we are about to remember is the most dramatic and influential week in human history.

It begins today, Palm Sunday, and it ends with Easter.

Let us take the events of the week as the Gospels give them to us. The moments I find most compelling are the Last Supper and Easter morning. Neither of these two events is public.

The public moments are Palm Sunday and Good Friday: a parade of sorts, and an execution. They somehow fit together. The roar of the crowd, celebrating and, then taunting.

Public moments pass quickly.

Crowds are fickle; friends are not.

Public moments are staged; private moments are not scripted.

The glory of Palm Sunday is not what Jesus chooses. Nor is the awful cross. He chooses, however, the Last Supper and, if you will, he chooses Easter.

If Jesus had to choose the most important moments in this week, the ones that gave him greatest joy, they would not be Palm Sunday nor, of course, would they include the cross. They would be the Last Supper and Easter morning. And if we asked the disciples, what were their most powerful moments in this week, they would choose the Last Supper and Easter morning.

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Why? Because the moments we spend with friends, the intimate moments of sharing, are when we are most ourselves and when we enter into our deepest communion with others.

It is not the glory of the wedding procession the bride remembers best but the moments when the wedding couple, alone, rejoice in the thought that they are now husband and wife. And it is not the wedding reception, with all its splendor, that means the most. It is the breakfast or dinner, the day after, when the couple, alone, break bread together in a communion of life.

It is not Palm Sunday but the Last Supper which gives Jesus the courage to face the cross. The public parade of palms is less meaningful than the dinner that Jesus says he longed to share with his friends. Jesus does not ask his friends to remember him in all his Palm Sunday triumph but he does ask them to remember him breaking bread, sharing wine, washing their feet, promising he will never leave them.

And the other great moment of this week is Easter Sunday. Easter is not a public event. There are no crowds. Jesus, now Christ, does not return to the parade route of Palm Sunday. Nor does he return to where the cross is still in place. He talks to Mary in a garden and to his frightened friends at dinner or at breakfast on the seashore or on the road to Emmaus. The gatherings are never large. These are intimate moments of friendship. These most meaningful moments are the ones when he raises them to life from the death of their betrayal, abandonment, and desertion. He tells them that he remembers, not their failure, but their friendship. "Do you love me, Peter?" Or to Magdalene, simply, "Mary" or to Thomas; "Peace be with you...do not doubt, Thomas...it is all right to believe."

The disciples would have chosen, not Palm Sunday, nor Good Friday, as the moments when their hearts were most with him. They would choose the Last Supper and the quiet Easter time together. They would choose, not so much the public Messiah of palms and nails but their friend, the Son of God, they would call him now, who gave them bread and washed their feet – the Christ of their faith who came back to tell them they were worth his returning to them because, without them, it was not really Easter for him.