

## Palm Sunday Homily

Not everybody likes a parade. Most of the religious leaders in Jerusalem that day probably either heard the commotion or heard about it later in the day. They were not pleased. Jesus was stealing their show. He was drawing more people to himself, and to God, than they were. They resented him and their resentment was so strong that it blinded them from seeing Jesus for who he was.

This resentment had been building up for several years. One can imagine the irritation felt by most of the Chief Priests, Scribes and Pharisees in Jerusalem as reports kept coming in from all the surrounding towns and villages describing what Jesus had done: curing diseases of every kind, healing the sick, performing one miracle after another, even on the Sabbath, and declaring that the Kingdom of God was at hand. They resented Jesus for welcoming and teaching the Gentiles; welcoming and eating with known sinners; associating with ethnic groups that were estranged from mainstream Judaism; giving a different interpretation of the scriptures and, on several occasions, directly challenging their authority and their usefulness as religious leaders.

They had tried to reign him in, to trap him in speech, to catch him in a compromising position. All of their attempts and schemes to discredit him in the eyes of the people had failed. Even in their last desperate gambit to rid themselves of this meddlesome rabbi they failed. Their scheme to have Jesus declared a revolutionary against Caesar and have Jesus crucified outright by Pilate failed. Yes, Pilate caved in to the point of turning Jesus over to them to be crucified. However, Pilate was able to get the last word in over their objections to the wording on the sign declaring Jesus the King of the Jews. Even in this seemingly small matter they failed.

Today many people around the world have a bitter resentment of Jesus. We don't have to look outside of our own communities to discover and expose them. Some of them are passing themselves off as religious leaders. They profess Jesus with their tongue while resenting his teaching that he did not come to abolish the Law (the Ten Commandments) or the teachings of the Prophets. They cherry pick which teachings of Jesus to follow but avoid teaching at all costs about the ones they themselves violate. Jeremiah is so right about them. So is Jesus. I hope they fail.