

Today's liturgy has two readings from the gospel of Mark. The first recounts Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the second is a participative reading of the Passion.

This juxtaposition of the triumphal entry and the crucifixion is jarring reminding us that public acclamation to turn public rejection and humiliation in the blink of an eye. Back when Morning Prayer was the main Sunday service the focus was on Jesus' triumphal entry and the reading of the Passion was reserved for Good Friday. This changed when the Prayer Book was rewritten in 1979 and the Eucharist became the primary worship service on Sunday. Of course, that was also when most regular church goers also went to church on Good Friday and would experience Jesus' suffering and death as the pivotal moment during Holy Week.

In truth, we cannot go from the triumphal entry into Jerusalem to the resurrection on Easter without acknowledging and entering into the crucifixion. It is the crucifixion, the willing suffering of Jesus that makes the resurrection possible and that's why the cross is the symbol of who we are as Christians. Therefore it was decided to combine the triumphal entry with the Passion gospel, to make sure that we do absorb the impact of Jesus' death and resurrection.

The narrated version, so different from our usual approach to the reading of the gospel makes Jesus' trial and execution real for us. It brings it to the present moment. And if we admit it to ourselves we become those who demand Jesus' death in that moment where we all yell "Crucify him!" Such words are hard to say we like to think that we would not have been part of that crowd so they are also a humbling reminder that sin infects us all.

Hearing today's Passion gospel speaks for itself so we will sit in silence for a few moments when it is done.

May you hear it, see it, and feel it as we move through this most holy week of our liturgical year.

Amen