

Resource 2: Closing Prayer

Read this reflection in the closing prayer:

The victory step of Palm Sunday is not a full victory in the same way that Easter resurrection is a full victory. We are still in the season of Lent and we are still on the journey, but victory is our sure hope and so we celebrate it, even if imperfectly.

Palms are a symbol of victory. On Palm Sunday, Jesus is welcomed into Jerusalem as a conquering king, but again this victory is marred by deep misunderstanding. Jesus did not come to win so that there would be losers over whom the victors can gloat. The ones who are celebrating the wrong kind of victory on Palm Sunday will be terribly disappointed when Jesus doesn't overpower Rome.

Another more subtle and more permanent victory is suggested by Jesus' war horse... it's not a horse at all; rather, it is a colt with no wartime experience. It has never been ridden before. In fact, the clear reference is to Zechariah 9:9 that suggests that this colt is actually a young donkey and the king who rides it is called "humble", the perfect Lenten bookend to the humble step of Ash Wednesday! This is hardly the entrance procession of a king intending to conquer with violence!

Disciples of Jesus at the close of Lent are challenged to rethink their notions of victory. What does winning mean to you? How can you win in a way that doesn't produce losers? Your victory step should not be a crushing experience for anyone because the kingdom that Jesus ushers in is one of loving relationships. In this kingdom, we all win!