

Palm Sunday, yr. a, 2020 – Blue Hill  
Handed Over – Rev. Dr. Deborah M. Jenks  
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On this Palm Sunday in the time of the corona virus, we follow with Jesus as he enters Jerusalem and faces death. Cries of “Hosanna” turn quickly to cries of “crucify” as we enter this Holy Week ... And we are caught in confusion and noise, anxiety and fear, not knowing what to believe, or what to trust in all that we hear and and all that we cry ourselves. And the confusion and the noise and the fear and the not knowing what to believe echoes in the world around us ...

It’s hard to keep our footing. Where do we stand? From what place do we come, as we enter this Holy Week?

As we prepare to enter this week, as we open our ears and our hearts to the Passion of Jesus these words from the gospel jump out at me: “...they handed him over”.

In the confusion ... the cries of “hosanna” mixed up with “crucify” ... we enter into a place and time of being “handed over” ourselves. We move from agency – being able to choose, to act for ourselves, to change and affect the circumstances – to helplessness, witnessing and experiencing our own powerlessness ...

In this time of the covid-19 pandemic we know, we experience:

- The helplessness that comes with illness ... “handing over” loved ones to the care of others. Unable to be with others as we need to keep our distance.
- We know, we experience the surprise of death – the waiting and then the moment ... handing over.
- We know, we experience the reality of circumstances beyond our ability to control or change ... we are all handed over.

This is the place from which and to which we come the Holy Week ... It is where our oneness with God – with Jesus – rests ... the ground on which we may begin to gain our footing. God handed over God’s self to us even as we are handed over to God. This is where we walk with Jesus in his Passion.

Priest and renowned theologian Henri Nouwen, who spent his last years living in community with people severely physically and cognitively impaired, said that “Passion is a kind of waiting – waiting for what other people are going to do ...” \*\*

- Waiting for others to say “Yes or No” ... to betray or follow ... to welcome or turn away ... to accept or reject.

As we enter into Holy Week, following Jesus in his passion, let us be attentive to the places where God and our lives intersect, encounter, even collide at this place of being “handed over.” Amen.

\*\* Inspiration for this meditation comes from Henri Nouwen as quoted in *Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter*. Plough Publishing House, New York, 2003.