

Homily for April 13, 2003  
Palm Sunday

By Father Charles Bowes

Mark 11:1-11

(gospel with procession of palms)

Isaiah 50:4-7

Philippians 2:6-11

Mark 14:1-15:47

## *The story of Jesus is our story.*

The passion story is a story of death and abandonment. The willing spirit, the weak flesh: “My God, why have you forsaken me?”

But even in that experience of forsakenness, the passion story tells us that we walk with our God. The Anglican writer, W. H. Vanstone, has written a book called *Fare Well In Christ*. It's a book about coping with anxiety and confusion. One chapter is called “The Sign of the Cross.” After a brief introduction, it simply retells six stories. There is the soldier, dying of cancer, who finds his last, wordless comfort in a palm cross left by a visiting priest. There is the boatload of Vietnamese refugees picked up by a British naval vessel, literally running away terrified from the crew until the captain sets up a wooden cross on deck and watches as, mysteriously, calm descends. There is the hard-bitten laborer in a working-class village who, one evening, sees a cross newly erected outside the parish church he never attends and, inexplicably, takes off his cap, walks up the hill and kneels in prayer before it. These, and the other stories, tell of wordless encounters. They are healings over and beyond our ability to explain.

Perhaps, as Vanstone concludes, the power of the cross derives simply from the story of the one who died upon it. Whatever our trouble, the cross tells us that our God is there too. This week, this Holy Week, we can discover anew the power of the cross. The schedule for the week is in our bulletin.

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