

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion – April 2, 2023 – Very Rev. Bryan W. Jerabek, J.C.L.
Cathedral of Saint Paul, Birmingham, Alabama – 7:15am and 8:30am Masses – 410 words

It is always difficult to know what to say after reading the Passion, and a homily today is in fact optional; so I will simply share some brief orientations as we begin another Holy Week.

As we approach this sacred time, we could, especially reading through a modern lens, at first glance think that Christ was the victim of political intrigue. Worldly fortunes rise and fall; there are power struggles; there is comeuppance. We see this sort of thing play out daily in our own national news. But Jesus was in no way subject to the changing tides of political factions. No, he was in full control of the entire situation; he planned every detail meticulously; he did everything intentionally to save us.

We see this in so many ways, from where they sought to persecute him on many occasions but he passed through the crowd unscathed – because his hour had not yet come –, to how he gave his disciples specific instructions about where they were to go and what they were to do – such as selecting a particular animal for him to ride on –, as he prepared for his passion and death. He foresaw and foreknew everything; by his Providence, he leveraged every bit of the political intrigue for our salvation.

Yes, at no point was our Lord defeated; he was always in full control and so on the path to certain victory. And if we, who seek to remain united with him by grace through prayer and the sacraments, would live more fully by faith, we would see more clearly how his Providence governs our lives, too. We would see more clearly how he leads and guides us through the ups and downs of this life on earth to the good things he has prepared for us in his Father's house. May he increase our faith this Holy Week.

How important, then, that we strive to be in the state of grace during these high holy days, but not only – that we also strive to enter into them devoutly and accompany our Lord through them. Whether we can picture ourselves as having an active part in each scene that we meditate on this week, or simply standing by in wonder and awe, let us be there with Jesus with open hearts truly to accompany him, as he works intentionally and fittingly to save us from our sins and secure the prize of salvation for all.