

REFLECTIONS ON THE LECTIONARY FOR LENT 6, YEAR A (PALM/PASSION SUNDAY)
FROM BISHOP SUSAN HAYNES

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16

Philippians 2:5-11

Matthew 27:11-54

Philippians 2:5-11

This Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week during which we enact, not so much a representation of the Passion of Christ, as the steps that must be taken to point to His ultimate victory over all death and evil at the end of all times. We remember, of course, his passion, death and resurrection; but we also look to the end times when the whole creation will be resurrected, restored and redeemed. In this section of Paul's Letter to the Philippians, the Epistle appointed for this Sunday, we are reminded that our state of mind is crucial as we await Christ's final victory.

"Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus," Paul says and thus gives us some direction. The state of our mind is central to our faithfulness as Christians. We must discern and try to cultivate Christ-like characteristics. Paul then gives voice to an ancient hymn, known as the *kenotic* hymn, which describes several characteristics of Christ's mind:

- Self-emptying (*kenosis*, by the way, means self-emptying)
- Selflessness
- Humble regard for others and their interests
- Humility (even though equal with God, He did not claim that)
- Obedient

I don't know about you, but when I look at those traits, I feel that I am far from having the mind of Christ. Particularly in this day and age, when we are frightened by all that threatens us, it is hard to be selfless, to care for others and their interests, to be humble and obedient. But the good news is that even if we don't quite have the mind of Christ, we can **act** as if we do. The late Dr. R. Maurice Boyd suggests that there is a link between mind and action: "We can think ourselves into a new way of acting, or we can act ourselves into a new way of thinking." Dr. Boyd goes on to describe "Habits of Being" which are behaviors in which we engage so as to infuse what we do. I am reminded of that old adage, "Fake it 'till you make it!" Even if we don't **feel** selfless, we can act as if we **are** selfless. Gradually our actions help us to become what we are doing.

What are your "habits of being?"

What do you want to become that you could start acting toward?

What actions could you engage in that would take into account the condition of others?

Who in your life needs you to express interest in what they are doing?

Where can you let others go before you? Where can you let others be first?

How is God calling you to be obedient? To what is He calling you to be obedient?

What do you need to do to change your actions so that they mirror the mind of Christ?