

## Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

Isaiah 50:5 "...I have not rebelled, have not turned back."

Luke 22:27 "I am among you as the one who serves."

"I am among you as the one who serves." It's one of many things Jesus said on the last night of his earthly life.

"I am among you as the one who serves." Jesus was contrasting himself with "the kings of the Gentiles" who lorded it over people. And he was offering himself as an example for his followers. "...among you it shall not be so," he said, in reference to those in authority.

"I am among you as the one who serves." Isn't that what Jesus' entire ministry was about? He served people by teaching them, by healing them, and, sometimes by challenging them. But Jesus never "lorded it" over people. And that's why, paradoxically, he alone deserves the title of "Lord."

"I am among you as the one who serves." And Jesus served until the end. Think of John's story of Jesus' washing his disciples' feet. Think of Jesus' promise, even as he was dying, that the so-called "good thief," dying at his side, would be with him in paradise.

Why did Jesus serve? Because he loved. He loved more than any human being has ever loved. That's why his only commandment was that we too must love. This love compelled him to joyful service, although there were times when he was sad. But he would never stop teaching, healing and challenging even if that meant his inevitable death at the hands of authorities who could not bear such goodness and love.

Jesus knew Isaiah's great book, and he must have known the Song of the Suffering Servant. When he heard the words, "I have not rebelled, have not turned back," he must have seen himself as their fulfillment. For he never rebelled against the divine call to love; he never turned back from serving, even when his agonizing death was in plain sight.

And what did he gain from all that? He gained the kingdom, that perfect joy that was his from all eternity.

Can we believe in such love as Jesus' love? Can we accept it? And can we pass it on? That is the challenge of this most holiest of weeks.

