

Hillcrest Congregational Church, UCC  
Rev. Dr. Loletta M. Barrett  
March 28, 2010  
The Whole Story  
Luke 19:28-40, Luke 22:14 –27, Luke 23: 33-46

Today is Palm Sunday, so we remembered and reenacted the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem. Today is also Passion Sunday, so we remembered Jesus' the Last supper with his disciples, and his crucifixion. Like other faith traditions, Christians celebrate holy days. But this is Holy Week- it includes the highest holy days (most important), of the Christian tradition- the last week of Jesus' life.

But we are a little different here. We broadened our celebration and started it with Advent and Christ/mass. We started with the prophetic call of God to Mary through an angel, and the directive incursion of God into the life of Joseph. We witnessed the journey of Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, Magi, Anna and Simeon, elders, doves, donkeys (notice they keep reoccurring in the stories about Jesus' life?), a journey with God into Jesus' life. The beginning.

Then, Holy Week: the triumphant entry, with the donkey again! The supper with the disciples, Jesus' journey to the cross, crucifixion, burial and resurrection. The end.

We wanted to tell “The Whole Story: From Prophecy to Fulfillment”:  
Amazing birth, terrible death, and wondrous resurrection. But that is not  
really the whole and complete story. We missed a whole lot of the middle.

Many of you know that I saw Marcus Borg speak last week. He is a  
truly deeply faithful man, and a wonderful scholar and lecturer. In the book  
he wrote with John Dominic Crossan, *The Last Week: A Day-by-Day  
Account of Jesus’ Final Week in Jerusalem*, he and Crossan critique the  
efforts to reduce the story of Jesus.

A particular example: “The Passion of Christ,” a movie directed by  
Mel Gibson in 2004. I agree with them that the movie “reinforced a  
widespread but much too narrow understanding of the “passion”” to the  
suffering of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

They point out that we use the word “passion” to mean something we  
are passionate about- something we love, or are committed to, even  
something that makes our life worthwhile and gives it meaning. Borg and  
Crossan believe that when we look at Jesus we should see the whole story of  
his life. They point out that Jesus lived his life passionate about the  
Kingdom of God.

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<sup>1</sup> The Last Week: A Day-by-Day Account of Jesus’ Final Week in Jerusalem, Marcus J. Borg and John  
Dominic Crossan, 2006, pg viii.

Jesus' life purpose was to "incarnate the justice of God by demanding for all a fair share of a world belonging to...God..." It was Jesus' "passion for God's distributive justice (that all might share in God's blessings), that lead inevitably to the second passion by Pilate's punitive justice," (execution on a cross). Focusing on only one part of the story of Jesus, "narrowing the passion of Jesus to the last twelve hours... is to ignore the connection between his life and his death." The whole story.

As we celebrate Palm Sunday today, anticipate the other events of Holy week before us this week, and dream of the resurrection to come, I invite you to open up your minds and hearts to the whole story; the connection between the life and death of the one we call Jesus, the Christ. As we do that, let us also look to the connection in our own lives, seeking a life lived in joyful connection with God, walking in the way of Jesus, the Christ.

If Jesus' passion was the kingdom of God- "thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven,"- and we are Jesus' followers, then we must ask, how are we called to participate in his passion- how are we to spread God's justice?

How can we be involved in ensuring that everyone receives and shares in God's blessings? If we want to know the whole story; from

prophecy to fulfillment- beginning to end, if we want to know and follow Jesus, the Christ, we need to go and explore the middle- his life.

And we need to be involved in what his life was centered in. We need to go and be about what he was about: bringing about the kingdom of God, the beloved community. We begin by sharing what we have, loving and serving others in the Way of Jesus, together. Let us go and do just that.

Today we leave this space to go and create Easter baskets. We go to share what we have so that others might know some joy and love. But this is just the beginning. Let us move with haste into the middle so we can experience the whole story.