

"Who is this?"

"When [Jesus] entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, 'Who is this?'"

The whole of the Holy City asked on a day long ago, "Who is this?" As Jerusalem experienced the unsettled turmoil, the fever pitch, and the near riots, they collectively yearned to know, "Who is this?" Crowds ran ahead of Jesus cutting down palm branches and throwing down their garments, as *they* had an answer for Jerusalem's question, shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!" and "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

Surely among the crowd were the disciples. They had professed already who this was. Later in this week these same men would answer the question "Who is this?" differently. Judas full of greed and disappointment betrayed his teacher with a kiss. Peter after Jesus foretold of his threefold denial replied, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." The other disciples chimed in likewise, but a cockcrow would be the alarm that awakened them from their denial! In the garden the most dedicated ones could not keep watch with Jesus. When those with swords and clubs arrived one disciple seethed with rage and turned to the sword. The disciples' responses to the question, "Who is this?" were not to hold up Jesus as the Messiah, or a Prophet, or even their rabbi. Instead, through betrayal, denial, unconsciousness, and violence they let their words and actions speak disbelief, fear, and unfaithfulness.

The danger with pointing out the disciples' sins comes when I try to wash my own hands of Jesus' death. I claim that it was the disciples' missteps and inaction, not mine. I likewise blame it upon religion and politics, the Jewish or the Roman people, not me. I so easily slide into the crowd to run from my own part in the story. And yet, even there hiding in the masses I discover that out of one side of my mouth I call Jesus a prophet and out of the other I cry for Jesus to be crucified. This is the danger: to sit back comfortably and wait for a week to pass, so that I may show up in

seersucker to sing my favorite hymns and never acknowledge my part in the story, my part in Jesus' death.

What if we did not know how this all will end? What if we were to watch with the women—Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee—to see how this story unfolds? What if we wondered anew, “Who is this?”?

This week suspend what you think you know. Look past the answers that the disciples, religion, politics, or others telling you who God is. Instead, walk the way of Holy Week, and wonder, “Who is this?”