

At each of my various church calls that I have served, the question always invariably comes up, “What do you like to be called?” I always tell folks I answer to almost anything. Well, folks would put Pastor Jeff together and shorten it to PJ and every place I have served, quite a few folks used that moniker. So, in the spirit of my 19 years of ordained pastoral time, I have decided to name these “short” Thursday reflections based on the lectionary texts - **Ponderings with PJ**. I have been trying to figure out a quick way to wet your minds for the upcoming Sunday lectionary texts. These texts are the living word of God that we hear every Sunday and I figure that Thursday is close enough to Sunday, but also not so far away, that you will remember any images that come to your mind from these reflections.

Here goes for the first Ponderings with PJ (PPJ)

Most of us, I think, love parades. The pageantry, the floats, the bands, the balloons, the little guys in the miniature cars, the candy, the clowns (OK, maybe not all of us love the clowns) I think you get the point. One of the joys of Thanksgiving Day for me has always been to watch the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade and on New Year’s Day to watch the Rose parade. I am always amazed, and in awe, of these spectacles.

This Sunday is one of those parade spectacles in the life of the church where under normal circumstances we parade around waving palms singing Hosanna to the king! We remember Jesus entrance into the great city by reading the text from Matthew this year and then enter into our sanctuaries with great joy – AND THEN –

By the time we get to the Gospel reading we switch, and we encounter the passion story, and we are left wondering where it will all lead? We know, of course, that it leads to the cross. This big ugly reminder to us that we live in a Good Friday world where things such as the corona virus invade our perceptions that we have anything under our control. This year even our palm parades and best laid out plans are out of our control in a Good Friday world.

We know the Good Friday world well since we live in it - but we are also a Resurrection people who know love, and hope, and forgiveness, and redemption, and service to our neighbor. Especially service to our neighbor in the way that we are hunkering down for the sake of the others in our community right now in this corona virus time.

A colleague of mine in Maryland posted a short clip of his young daughter in his kitchen making the sunbeams dance all around as they reflected off of the sequins on her sweatshirt. Gives us hope that being resurrection people we will dance and move the sunbeams around like a little child for the sake of the world no matter what part of Good Friday befalls us!

Peace,  
Pastor Jeff