

PALMARUM SUNDAY

04/09/17

Mt. Calvary, West View / Pentecost, Avella

Old Testament: Isaiah 50:4-9a, The Epistle: Philippians 2:5-11, The Holy Gospel: John 12: 9-19

Theme: Terrorist Plot

+ Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN +

Our Text is taken from the Gospel of St. John, the 12th chapter:

When the great crowd of the Jews learned that He was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus also to death, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

Did you know that we are in Terror alert status Yellow? Our current status chart consists of five colors which designate the level of terror we should be concerned with. From lowest to highest we have green, blue, yellow, orange, and red. Green is labeled "Low", signifying, "Low risk of terrorist attacks." Blue is labeled "Guarded", signifying, "General Risk of Terrorist Attacks." Yellow is labeled "Elevated", signifying, "Significant Risk of Terrorist Attacks." Orange is labeled "High", signifying, "High Risk of Terrorist Attacks." Finally Red is labeled "Severe", signifying, "Severe Risk of Terrorist Attacks." Sad thing is, I have not seen where the delineation is on making the call from yellow to orange, or even from yellow to blue or green. This raises many questions for me. Is it an arbitrary call to decide what the color of the day is to be? Is there never going to be a green because that would just invite any nut-job to go for it since everybody's guard would be down? If we were in a red zone, is there going to be martial law? Would we still have a seven day waiting period to defend ourselves? And can you really see a

difference between the colors orange and red? Should not yellow be more a purple, or maybe make orange a polka dot type of color so that there will be less confusion?

All this of course got me thinking, what is the terror level for our text? Last week the disciples were quite afraid to go to Jerusalem because they knew the Jews were looking to stone them, or at least just Jesus. What would that terrorist level be considered? Blue, because they were a little guarded in their travel? Yellow, because its elevated from their last run in with the Pharisees? Maybe not öredö just yet for there has not been an actual attempt since the fourth chapter of Luke, *öWhen they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and drove Him out of the town, and brought Him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw Him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, He went away.ö*

But there is a lot of chatter. Boy, howdy, is there chatter. Though the Gospels like to center their attention on Jesus and His life and message, and rightly so, for without the life and message of Jesus not a single one of us has any chance at Salvation, John gives us a more complete look into the plot to assassinate Jesus. Assassinate? Is that word even in the Holy Scriptures? Only in Acts is the word used, and it was used by the Tribune to inquire of Paul if he was working with such people who were in the wilderness stirring up trouble. Yet, it is appropriate terminology, for assassinate is a level beyond murder, for it is used politically or religiously against an important person in a surprising way. You and I cannot be assassinated, I guess, because we are not all that important compared to other people's criteria. I guess we will have to settle for simple murder, manslaughter, blitz attack type of designations. Yet, I will call Jesus an important person. I will say that the murder of Jesus is both political and religious to these Jews. The only problem is, it is going to be a surprise to everyone but Jesus. So assassination terrorist plot this is.

To add insult to injury, they are adding Lazarus to their hit list. Poor guy, he did not do anything wrong, but because he is living and breathing, and Jesus made this happen with just a simple command, he's gotta go too! Sin is the ultimate blindness. If we have not learned anything in the past few Sundays, we need to remember this: Sin is nothing more than blindness; an inability to see our actions as wrong and against God. If we truly would see our sins as what they are, we would not be plotting to do bad things; we would not be trying to hide our actions from the light that shows our actions and deeds. If we truly could see our sins as they are, and the wrath that it places us away from the Father, we certainly would not have thought, said, done, or covered up such things and turned from them and live. I was informed once that the easiest way to tell if what you were about to do was a sin or not, would you want people to see what you are doing? It seems to me, that many of these terrorists *want* people to see them, to recognize them, to know they did such sinful things so as to be feared. Indeed, our sinful nature knows nothing about turning away from sins. It sees nothing but its own selfish agenda, and whoever is in the way, well, they need to be eliminated, however it can be done.

It should not surprise us that the world is in the state it is in. We live in a very sinful world, and it is only going to get worse. Remember what man collectively did, right after the flood? We tried to build a tower to God so that we could be equal to him. That was the purpose of the tower of babble. God thwarted our stupidity by mixing our language so that we would not be able to collectively do such stupid things. I guess the old axiom is true: Never underestimate the power of stupid people in large groups. I think I have a new shirt to print out. Too bad the Christian Book Stores are out of business. I could have made a "killing", but I digress. The tower of Babble is about to relive itself because we humans have not learned from our history and are doomed to repeat it. Soon, you will be able to have an instant translator. A headset that will instantaneously

translate any language you are hearing so that you will be able to communicate seamlessly and flawlessly. All this is going to do is allow us to sin more widely with more people and make us less aware of Almighty God in our midst. You heard it here first.

The answer to all this is we need Jesus, we need His love for us, we need His Salvation offered to us. Even though man may plot to take over the world, we fear no terrorist level because Jesus is in control. It is His Word that sustains you when you are weary of this world and its desire to destroy itself. It is our God Who keeps us from disgrace for Jesus has gone to the cross, despite of the terrorist plot against Him, and allowed Himself to be the Sacrificial Lamb that makes you a new person in faith. Though the old man in you cannot do anything more than bring you terror for sins, the New man rises up from your baptism and desires nothing more than Christ Jesus and His merits for salvation.

The world can plot and scheme all it wants. Terrorist alerts can go all the way to neon red for all I care. I will fear not, for Jesus is my salvation. You need not worry what this world may do. It did its worst to Jesus and He rose from the dead to live again anyway. It tried to seal His doom, and all it accomplished is making His resurrection miracle more magnificentó greater than the raising of Lazarus. The world has not stopped this message yet, and it cannot. For at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, believers in adoration as the shepherds at the nativity, the wicked in submission to the awesome power of our God. Fear not the terrorist, for Christ has overcome the world. In His Most Holy Name we pray. **AMEN.**

+ AND NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING
KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS. AMEN+

Offering / Prayers

There are only two days on my calendar...today and the day of judgment