

“Crucify him! Crucify him! Crucify him!”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time, a professional group of actors was hired to do a stage production of the passion of Jesus. That is, they were hired to act out the story of the suffering and death of Jesus, beginning with Palm Sunday and ending with Good Friday.

The main characters—like Jesus, Pilate, and Peter—were played by the professionals.

The minor characters—like those in the crowd scenes—were played by local people.

One of the minor characters picked to play in the crowd scenes was a young boy named Drew. As you can imagine, he was very excited about being chosen.

On the night of the play, the minor characters were called together. The director introduced them to a dozen men wearing red turbans. He said:

**“These are your leaders. When you get on stage, watch them carefully.
Do everything they do. Shout everything they shout!”**

Then the director stressed that two scenes, especially, were important. The 1st one was the Palm Sunday scene. The 2nd was the Good Friday scene.

Young Drew could hardly wait for the Palm Sunday scene to begin. Finally, the curtain went up. The men in the red turbans shouted:

“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” The crowd shouted:

“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Drew got so caught up in the shouting that he forgot about the audience and he forgot that it was only a play. It WAS Palm Sunday and HE –WAS praising Jesus!

Before Drew realized it, the scene was over. The men in the red turbans led the crowd off stage. There, Drew waited excitedly for the second important scene: Jesus condemned on Good Friday.

Just before the curtain went up, the men in the red turbans reminded the crowd:

“Watch us carefully! Do everything we do! Shout everything we shout!”

The curtain rose, revealing a balcony. On it stood two people: Pilate, in a gold robe, and Jesus, in a purple robe. Pilate said to the crowd:

“Which man do you want me to set free: Jesus or Barabbas?”

The men in the red turbans shouted: **“Barabbas!”**

The crowd in turn, likewise, shouted: **“Barabbas!”**

When the shouting died down, Pilate said to the crowd:

“What then should I do with Jesus?”

The men in the red turbans shouted: **“Crucify him!”**

Like clockwork, the crowd shouted: **“Crucify him!”**

Once again, Drew got so caught up in the shouting, he forgot the audience; he forgot the play. Suddenly, he found himself screaming at the top of his voice, to be heard by everyone:

“NO! NO! Don’t crucify him! Please, please, don’t you crucify him!”

Years later, Drew recalled his passion play experience. He said it taught him something he never really thought about before, BUT had remembered the rest of his life:

The people who shouted, "**Hosanna!**" on Palm Sunday, were the very same people who shouted, "**Crucify Him!**" five days later, on Good Friday. AND the reason they did it... was because... the men in the red turbans... told them to do it.

So-o, what's my point?

Many people in today's world are like the people in the crowd in that play. They perform on cue. They don't think for themselves. They don't speak for themselves. They simply mimic the men in the red turbans.

They don't stand against evil in our world. They simply follow the leader, blend in with the crowd.

For example, they don't take a stand against the assault on innocent, human life, whether it is in a womb or in an old-age-home, hospital bed.

For example, they don't take a stand against the discrimination of minorities, whether these minorities are Catholics, Jews, Blacks, Hispanics, or Middle-East-Christians.

For example, they don't take a stand against the moral erosion of entertainment, especially for our youth in society—whether that erosion is on television, in music, the theater, or at concerts.

In short, they don't stand up for Christ and Christ's teachings in our world.

And so, Christ suffers and dies all over again... in our brothers and sisters all over the world.

But **WE**, as Christ's followers—"Christ-i-ans," are called to be different. And your presence here shows that you want to express that difference. "How so?" you ask.

Well, I'm glad you asked that question!

You see, we are called upon to challenge the men in the red turbans...perhaps by writing our Congressmen/women. We are called to challenge the crowd. We are called to take a stand for Christ and his teachings in today's world.

The story of young Drew's experience in that Passion play makes us ask ourselves...
can we do more, pray more, sacrifice more for Christ...
who died, prayed, and sacrificed so-o much for us?

I now close with this prayer:

**Lord, help us realize that the same crowd that shouted 'Hosanna' on Palm Sunday
shouted, "Crucify him!" on Good Friday.**

Help us realize that this happens, not only in plays, but also in real life.

**Help us realize that, when it does happen in real life,
Christ suffers and dies all over again... in our brothers & sisters.**

**Help us realize that, as Christians, we are called to be different.
We are to bear witness to Christ and to his teachings in our world...
in our life...where we live, eat, and sleep.**

**We are NOT to follow the crowd... nor...
the men in the red turbans!**

May our Almighty God, our dear Abba, bless you once again...
the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.