

## **Palm Sunday 2021: Sunday, March 28, 2021**

St. Vincent de Paul Church

### A Gospel Reflection

What an important and almost overwhelming reading for reflection! We've all heard it many times and probably each of us has parts of it that are close to our hearts. There is the woman who anoints Jesus with oil...so beautiful. There is the Last Supper, the first Eucharist! And, of course, the crucifixion.

The sections of this reading that really strike me every year are Simon Peter's falling asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane and his three denials of Jesus, plus Simon the Cyrenian. My maiden name is Simon so I feel that it is ME being too weak to stay awake, ME denying Jesus, yet also ME carrying Jesus's cross.

I can well picture the scene in the garden: Too much wine after the Passover feast, Jesus's terrible Agony, and me dozing off... oblivious to what Jesus is going through. I feel that way when trying to meditate, my mind drifting off to any topic, not staying with my Lord.

I also can empathize with Peter when he tells the woman he doesn't know what she's talking about...something not specific, not quite a lie. Then he gets himself in quite a bit deeper when he denies being one of Jesus's followers. He really tops it off when he proclaims, "I do not know this man about whom you are talking." Would I have done that? Would I do it now?

As for the Cyrenian, here is a poem that says it all for me:

### **Simon the Cyrenian Speaks** *by Countee Cullen*

He never spoke a word to me,  
And yet He called my name;  
He never gave a sign to me  
And yet I knew and came.  
At first I said, "I will not bear  
His cross upon my back;  
He only seeks to place it there  
Because my skin is black."

But He was dying for a dream,  
And He was very meek,  
And in His eyes there shone a gleam  
Men journey far to seek.

It was Himself my pity bought;  
I did for Christ alone  
What all of Rome could not have wrought  
With bruise of lash or stone.

*Rita McMullin*