

**Palm Sunday, 2008**  
**St. Raphael, Springdale, AR**

We all know that our actions speak louder than our words. We immediately feel uncomfortable and even hypocritical when we say one thing and then turn around and do the opposite. That's one reason I cannot stand to see basketball players strut around like peacocks all season and claim to be the best. Now, I don't mind that they do that, and I will even applaud them, AFTER they win the NCAA tournament. By the way, I'm beginning to believe a little more in the Razorbacks after their victories over Vanderbilt and Tennessee, and the intention of this Mass is for their game against Georgia today (just kidding). But you see, our actions speak louder than our words.

I'm a little embarrassed to tell you this, but I've never been very fond of Palm Sunday, and it's not because we have to stand through the long reading of the gospel. Rather, it's because today we see a dramatic clash between words that say one thing and actions that "say" something very different. At the beginning of this Mass, we remember how the crowds received Jesus as He entered into Jerusalem: waving palm branches and singing "Hosanna." But 5 days later the same people are shouting "Crucify Him!" and want to condemn Jesus to death. It strikes me as the height of hypocrisy to welcome Jesus as king one day and then want to kill Him as a common criminal the next day. Actions speak louder than words, and in the gospel today people's actions were saying exactly the opposite of their words.

Folks, we say we love Jesus and are serious about being good Christians. But what do our actions say? John Maxwell, a renowned author on leadership explains how crucial our actions are. He says: "Sometimes we think we are committed to something, yet our actions indicate otherwise. Take out your calendar and your checkbook register. Spend a few hours tallying up how you spend your time and where you spend you money. Look at how much time you spend at work, in service (or at church), with family, in health and recreation activities, and so forth. Figure out how much money you spent on living expenses, entertainment, personal development, and giving (to church and charity). All of these things are the true measure of your commitment. You may be surprised by what you find." Now, just in case you're wondering, if you give more to the collection on Sunday, my own salary will not increase by even one penny. Just in case you were wondering. But, folks, what will increase is your personal integrity. And what will decrease is the distance between your words and your actions.

My friends, actions speak louder than words. What have your actions been saying lately?

Praised be Jesus Christ!