

## **Man the Rails for the Savior**

**Paul A. Schumann**

A ship passing [a vessel commanded by an officer of superior rank] renders honors by sounding, “Attention,” and all hands topside render a hand salute until the ship has passed...and “Carry on” is sounded (Connell and Mack, 2004). Friday was my first experience “manning the rails.” We did this to honor the position of officers that passed by our ship. We did this out of respect.

What if today, Palm Sunday, a ship passed with the Savior on board? What would be the response from the crew of the USS RUSHMORE? Would He be deemed important enough for the crew to “man the rails” and render honors?

Toward the end of the Savior’s earthly ministry, he made his final entry into Jerusalem. As prophesied by Zechariah, he rode on a donkey as he entered the city.

And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.

And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

The people in Jesus’ day were definitely “manning the rails” to honor Him. They testified of the great works he had done in the name of God. Of course, not everyone believed He deserved such honors.

And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. (Matt 21:8, Luke 19:37-40)

Why did the Pharisees oppose these honors rendered to Jesus? It was because of their unbelief and pride. They did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. They were also caught up in their own pride. If Jesus was the Son of God, in their minds it would threaten the authority they held in their community. Sadly, the Pharisees loved earthly power more than divine truth. Jesus came to speak truth to power.

Jesus testified of his own divinity by telling the Pharisees that if the people did not declare his divine sonship, the stones would do it. Psalm 19:1 reads: “The heavens declare the glory of God.” All creation witnesses of the divinity of Christ.

What then will be our response? When given an opportunity to honor the Son of God, will we do so in humility and joy, or will our unbelief and pride prevent us? It is unlikely that we will literally pass a ship with the Savior on board, but what about in our daily lives? Do we symbolically have opportunities to honor Him in the way we live our lives?

Is our life in keeping with the commandments he has given? In John 14:15 the Savior declares, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” To keep his commandments is to honor him. Do we honor other Gods instead of honoring our Father in Heaven? Are we too busy on the Lord’s day to honor him and instead give our honor and attention to the world? Do we honor our parents? Are we honest in our dealings with others? Speak truthfully of others? Covet those things that belong to someone else?

Of course, the Savior’s invitation in John 14:15 is not limited to the 10 commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai. This invitation includes the commandment to love one another as He has loved us. It includes the commandment to go the extra mile, turn the other cheek, and love God with all our heart, might, mind, and strength. When we do these things, we symbolically “man the rails” and honor the Son of God.

When we honor the Savior in this way, it blesses our lives. We are more in harmony with the divine purpose to which he has called us. No matter our outward

circumstances, we will be filled with hope and peace that can be received in no other way.

When we honor the Savior in this way, it also blesses the lives of others. The Savior invited us to “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” When we honor the Savior, others see it and are led to honor Him as well. They receive hope and experience the peace that passes all understanding.

In order to “man the rails” we must be in the proper uniform. If we are not dressed appropriately, we will not be ready. My hope is that we will live our lives in such a way that we will be ready to go topside, “man the rails,” and render honors to the Savior. Doing so will relieve us of the burden of pride and replace it with the love of God. We will live in faith instead of fear, and stand ready to do our duty, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### References

*Naval Ceremonies, Customs, and Traditions.* Connell and Mack. Naval Institute Press, 2004.

## **Scripture Readings for Worship Service (one per page)**

### **Psalm 50:2-6**

Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself.

### **Matthew 5:14-16**

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.