

## Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion and Death – St. Louis

A soldier of the Argyll regiment (during World War II) was in a work detail on the railway. The day's work had ended; the tools were being counted, as usual. As the work detail was about to be dismissed, the Japanese guard shouted that a shovel was missing and insisted that someone had stolen it to sell to the Thais. He stode up and down before the men and denounced them for their wickedness and their ingratitude to the Emperor.

As he raved, he worked himself up into a paranoid fury. Screaming in broken English, he demanded that the guilty party step forward to take his punishment. No one moved; the guard's rage reached the height of violence and he threatened death to all.

To show that he meant what he said he cocked his rifle, out it on his shoulder and looked down the sights, ready to fire at the first man at the end of them. At that moment one of the soldiers stepped forward, stood stiffly to attention and said calmly, "I did it."

The guard unleashed all his whipped up hate. He kicked the helpless prisoner and beat him with his fists. Still the soldier stood rigidly at attention, with blood streaming down his face. His silence goaded the guard to excess rage. Seizing his rifle b y the barrel, he lifted it high over his head and with a final howl brought it down on the skull of the soldier who sank limply to the ground. Although it was perfectly clear that he was dead, the guard continued to beat him and stopped only when he was exhausted.

The men of the work detail picked up their comrade's body, shouldered their tools and marched back to the camp. When the tools were counted again at the guardhouse, ~~no~~ shovel was missing. ONE

Jesus stood up and took it for us. "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." Jesus did it for us. May we "die for others" in whatever way we can.