

Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion – April 5, 2020



Welcome

Liturgy of the Palms

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew, the 21st Chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, ‘Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, “The Lord needs them.” And he will send them immediately.’ This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

‘Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

‘Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!’

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, ‘Who is this?’ The crowds were saying, ‘This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.’

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

We praise you, O God,
for redeeming the world through our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Today he entered the holy city in triumph
and was proclaimed messiah and king
by those who spread garments and branches along his way.
Bless these branches and those who carry them.
Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross,
so that, joined to his death and resurrection,
we enter into life with you;
through the same Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Let us go forth in peace,
in the name of Christ. **Amen.**

Processional Hymn: *All Glory, Laud, and Honour* (ELW #344)

**All glory, laud, and honor
to you, redeemer, king,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.**

**You are the king of Israel
and David's royal Son,
now in the Lord's name coming,
our King and Blessed One.**

All glory, laud, and honor
to you, redeemer, king,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.

The company of angels
are praising you on high;
creation and all mortals
in chorus make reply.

All glory, laud, and honor
to you, redeemer, king,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.

The multitude of pilgrims
with palms before you went;
our praise and prayer and anthems
before you we present.

All glory, laud, and honor
to you, redeemer, king,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.

To you, before your passion,
they sang their hymns of praise.
To you, now high exalted,
our melody we raise.

All glory, laud, and honor
to you, redeemer, king,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.



Text: Theodulph of Orleans, 760-821; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.



Let us pray:

Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free all that you have made from sin and death. Breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 50:4-9a

The Lord God has given me

the tongue of a teacher,

that I may know how to sustain

the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens—

wakens my ear

to listen as those who are taught.

The Lord God has opened my ear,

and I was not rebellious,

I did not turn backwards.

I gave my back to those who struck me,

and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;

I did not hide my face

from insult and spitting.

The Lord God helps me;

therefore I have not been disgraced;

therefore I have set my face like flint,

and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.
It is the Lord God who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.



Gospel: Matthew 27:45-56

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 27th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

We would normally read a really long story right now on a normal Palm and Passion Sunday, but we won't read the whole thing today. You may or may not know it well, so to refresh your memory it all happens something like this... Jesus' friend Judas has made a deal with the religious leaders to hand Jesus over to them when the time is right. He's made a good deal – it's about four months' pay. Only a day or two later Jesus has a Passover meal with his disciples and he gives them bread and wine that he calls his own body and blood. That same night Jesus finds himself in a quiet place – maybe a garden or a meadow or an olive grove - praying late into the night and he's afraid and he wonders if maybe all these things that are happening could maybe not happen. He's arrested and goes to trial where he says nothing, not a word, in his own defense. A crowd of people in the city call out, "Crucify him" His closest follower says he's never heard of Jesus, and the usual crowd of his disciples who had followed him before are nowhere to be found. Jesus is convicted, and sentenced and crucified, and we pick up the story here:

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.' At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.' Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out

of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'

Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

HOMILY

It's quite a collection of readings here. It all begins with that palm procession where Jesus is with his disciples, and they pass through a crowd – a great crowd, like Matthew says – on the way into Jerusalem. All those people celebrating and welcoming Jesus and saying all kinds of good and faithful and hopeful things about him. Only a little while later there's a crowd – the same crowd? - that's changed its tune and now cries out for an execution. And then the story draws to a close with a small crowd again. It's just a few Roman soldiers, and two women named Mary, and the mother of James and John, two of Jesus' friends who are nowhere to be seen.

In between all this? There's joy, anger, revolution and resignation; trust, betrayal, stories and mysteries and riddles, political intrigue and theological debate. Fear and hope, a good meal with friends and food and wine and later on a tragic turn of events....and there's disappointment and loneliness and the sad company of friends who sit together and grieve together.

Between the palms and the passion there's a bit of everything. Those two things, the palms and the passion, kind of gather up whatever might be happening at any given time, in any given place, ever right now, even right here,

even wherever you are. And Jesus is all caught up and woven into those stories here and now as they unfold around us and around the world.

This day begins another year's Holy Week, when we move through the last days of Lent and remember and recollect all the pieces of this story that is right there at the heart our life and our faith. I think that we sometimes tend to look at this week as a time just to remember. We hear a familiar flow of events again and again and we recognize all the different players and at the centre of the whole thing we see Jesus. And although we might have all kinds of different ways of understanding and agreeing and disagreeing about what we mean by it all, we talk about this as the story of salvation; about how even through this suffering and death the life of the world is being promised and given. And that's good – it's what's going on here.

But this whole week we're entering into today is not really about re-living those events, or watching the drama again the same way that you might watch your favourite movie...again...or acting out the story like we might try to act out the best of Shakespeare. Instead, this coming week points us again to Jesus who acts in our story now.

...Maybe just kind of quietly...

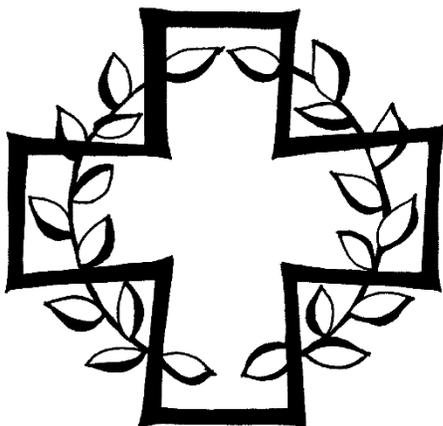
Sure, it all starts with a bang, and we the crowd sing Hosanna and wave our branches or sticks or plants or coats and it's triumphant and the one who will save the world comes into town, into our lives and we're sure and it's fun and we join in as Jesus comes...on a donkey? A strange grand entrance, but a grand entrance indeed. And Jesus is plain to see right there.

But the grand scene fades – you know that, and I know it, and as much as we might like life to be filled with high points we know that that fades too. Loneliness, or sadness, or betrayal or hurt become our story...and Jesus is woven quietly into those stories too. A dinner with close friends, like Jesus and the twelve before it all went strange...it's still a dinner with close friends...or political games or unjust trials or religious leaders silencing someone they don't want to hear...even in all those stories that we see and are a part of Jesus is quietly woven into the story. Where we're on the right side or the wrong side of the story, Jesus

is there in the story. Or if our story or your story is a story about being lonely or afraid and you wish you lived in a different story...Jesus is woven into your story too. As a few friends gather to grieve - maybe because gatherings of no more than a few are all that's allowed - Jesus is caught up in the whole thing...your story, my story, our story.

Let this holiest of weeks remind you of how closely Jesus' life is tied up with all of our life together. Living with us wherever we live now, suffering with all those who suffer and dying with all those who die and that kind of means all of us...Jesus has tied himself to our living and our dying. And we do know where the story goes a week from now, and we will hear again that the new life of the risen Jesus is tied to us as well...and we will be raised, and all creation will be made new.

Until then...however our lives are unfolding in this week to come, the promise of Holy Week is that there is this one whose place is with us in the life that we know. Quietly with us...and we are not alone. AMEN.



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

**Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
Send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.**

Let us pray.

Mighty God of mercy, we thank you for the resurrection dawn, bringing the glory of our risen Lord who makes every day new. Especially we thank you –
for the sustaining goodness of your creation...
for the new creation in Christ and all gifts of healing and forgiveness...
for the gifts of relationships with others...
for the communion of faith in your church...

(name some other things for which you are thankful...)

Merciful God of might, renew this weary world, heal the hurts of all your children, and bring about your peace for all in Christ Jesus, the living Lord.

Especially we pray –

for those who govern the nations of the world...

for the people in countries ravaged by strife and warfare...

for the people in this and all nations in fear of illness and pandemic...

for all who work for peace and international harmony...

for all who strive to save the earth from carelessness and destruction...

for all our sisters and brothers throughout the earth...

(name some other people or places or situations that need our prayer...)

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, grant us O God, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, and who taught us to pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever.
AMEN.**

SENDING HYMN - Praise and Thanks and Adoration (ELW #783)

Praise and thanks and adoration,
Son of God, to you we give,
for you chose to serve creation,
died that sinners all might live.

Dear Lord Jesus, guide my way;
faithful let me day by day
follow where your steps are leading,
find adventure, joys exceeding!

Hold me ever in your keeping,
comfort me in pain and strife;
through my laughter and my weeping,
lift me to a nobler life.

Draw my fervent love to you;
constant hope and faith renew
in your birth, your life and passion,
in your death and resurrection.



*Text: Thomas H. Kingo, 1634-1703; tr. Lutheran Book of WorshipText © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, admin.
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BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favour and give you peace.
Amen.

Go in peace. Serve your neighbour. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Thanks to Ken Mann for the Music, Jonathan Krentz and Vickie Albrecht for assisting with readings and prayers, and Joey McCorrie for technical wizardry!