

ZION GATE
JERUSALEM

Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord!

MATTHEW 21:9

APRIL 5
2020

Palm Sunday

OF THE PASSION
OF THE LORD

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Holy Week And The Paschal Triduum

Sunday, March 28 - Sunday, April 4, 2010

"The days of Jesus' life-giving death and glorious resurrection are approaching, the hour he triumphed over Satan's pride, the time we celebrate the great event of our redemption" (Preface of the Lord's Passion II, Sacramentary). Thus the Church begins the one week of the year that we formally designate as "Holy." Simple rituals can link the domestic church to parish church and Church universal. Enthroned Sunday's palms where you pray, behind the family crucifix, even as part of front door decorations: "Christ reigns here," they proclaim; "all are welcome!" During the first three days of Holy Week, ready Easter clothes, prepare festal foods, clean the house, beautify the yard. Late Holy Thursday afternoon, share Lent's final meal before the Lord's Supper Mass. Pitcher, bowl, and towel make a fitting centerpiece; perhaps conclude the meal by washing each other's feet. On Good Friday, observe the paschal fast from food—from TV and computer, too! Then come to Holy Saturday's Vigil with mind clear, stomach empty, and heart full of "holy anticipation" that bursts into living flame when the new fire is kindled.

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PRAYER IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

O God of compassion,
your people are anxious
in this time of pandemic.
Send your Holy Spirit among us
to dispel our fears.
We cry out to you in our confusion;
comfort us in our affliction.
Grant our leaders wisdom to guide us.
Strengthen and sustain those who are ill,
and be with those who care for them.
Help us to travel this road
in solidarity with our neighbors,
with our eyes fixed on the salvation
promised us through the death and resurrection
of your Son,
who is Lord forever and ever.
Amen.

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Readings for the Week

Monday: Is 42:1-7; Ps 27:1-3, 13-14; Jn 12:1-11
Tuesday: Is 49:1-6; Ps 71:1-6, 15, 17;
 Jn 13:21-33, 36-38
Wednesday: Is 50:4-9a; Ps 69:8-10, 21-22, 31, 33-34;
 Mt 26:14-25
Thursday: Chrism Mass: Is 61:1-3a, 6a, 8b-9;
 Ps 89:21-22, 25, 27; Rv 1:5-8;
 Lk 4:16-21
Lord's Supper: Ex 12:1-8, 11-14;
 Ps 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18;
 1 Cor 11:23-26; Jn 13:1-15
Friday: Is 52:13 — 53:12; Ps 31:2, 6, 12-13,
 15-17, 25; Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9;
 Jn 18:1 — 19:42
Saturday:
 a) Gn 1:1 — 2:2 [1:1, 26-31a];
 Ps 104:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12, 13-14, 24, 35; or
 Ps 33:4-7, 12-13, 20-22;
 b) Gn 22:1-18 [1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18]; Ps 16: 5, 8-11;
 c) Ex 14:15 — 15:1; Ex 15:1-6, 17-18;
 d) Is 54:5-14; Ps 30:2, 4-6, 11-13;
 e) Is 55:1-11; Is 12:2-6;
 f) Bar 3:9-15, 32 — 4:4; Ps 19:8-11;
 g) Ez 36:16-17a, 18-28; Ps 42:3, 5; 43:3-4 or
 Is 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6 or Ps 51:12-15, 18-19;
 h) Rom 6:3-11; i) Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23;
 Mt 28:1-10
Sunday: Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Ps 118:1-2, 16-17,
 22-23; Col 3:1-4 or 1 Cor 5:6b-8;
 Jn 20:1-9 or Mt 28:1-10 or
 (at an afternoon or evening Mass)
 Lk 24:13-35



Today's Readings

Gospel at the Procession with Palms — Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11).

First Reading — In spite of my sufferings I am not disgraced. I am not put to shame (Isaiah 50:4-7).

Psalm — My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? (Psalm 22).

Second Reading — Christ emptied himself, and God filled this emptiness with exaltation (Philippians 2:6-11).

Gospel — The account of Christ's passion according to Matthew (Matthew 26:14 — 27:66 [27:11-54]).

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Five Simple Ways to Celebrate Holy Week at Home

Create a simple prayer space in your home, and gather there to pray during the week.

Palm Sunday: At your regular Mass time, read the first Palm Sunday Gospel (Mt 21:1-11) and meditate on or discuss what Jesus might be thinking as he enters Jerusalem for the last time.

Holy Thursday: Bake bread for sharing at dinner; make a ritual of stripping the dinner table of all cloths and decorations after dinner.

Good Friday: Pray the Stations of the Cross at 3 p.m.

Holy Saturday: In the morning, read Psalm 64 and break your Good Friday fast solemnly with a simple meal.

Easter Sunday: Dress up the dinner table again. Include candles and crosses, so that the candy baskets aren't the only festive items present. Sing Alleluia and read the Easter Gospel (Matthew 28:1-10) with solemnity and joy.

Look online for other suggestions for celebrating Holy Week at home, to deepen and enrich your experience at this time of social isolation.

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The journey of Lent brings us to an encounter with the cross. During Lent, we have been led more deeply into questions at the heart of our faith: Who is God? And who are we, the Church? The Gospel of Matthew indicates that, in the crucifixion, God's true nature is most fully revealed in Jesus. In Jesus, God is the self-emptying One, who embraces humility and suffers rejection, as Paul tells the Philippians. God's power is redefined, present not in coercion and violence, but in Jesus' unbounded love. We the Church can learn who we are, the followers of the Crucified One, when we bear crosses that offer life and hope to the world. We more fully become the Church when we empty ourselves by sharing in others' sufferings, rejecting violence, and taking risks for justice and reconciliation. Like Jesus, we may reveal God's power as compassion and mercy.

Enduring Hope

Today's passage from Isaiah presents us with a common human dilemma: what do we do with our suffering? The speaker describes himself as God's faithful servant, who suffers beatings and mockery. We can't be sure who the speaker is, but we can see his extraordinary response. He chooses not to fight back, not to respond to violence with violence. He chooses to endure with hope that God, in God's own way, will deliver and vindicate him. Christians later saw this passage as a poignant description of Jesus' suffering in his passion. We all have many experiences of tragic or undeserved suffering. We might desire to run from our pain, or to

inflict suffering upon others, or to live in despair. In faith, we are invited to share in the suffering of Jesus, sharing also with all who suffer similarly. We can place our wounds in God's hands. We may live in enduring hope that Christ is indeed present and accompanies us in our pain. In God's own way, our suffering may be transformed, so to serve God's purposes.

A New Kingdom

The Gospel of Matthew, using various symbols from scripture, presents Jesus as the true and victorious king who begins a new kingdom. After his royal entrance into Jerusalem, Jesus ascends his scandalous and paradoxical throne, the cross. The cross reveals the nature of his kingdom, based on God's forgiveness and sacrificial love. Evil forces thrive when violence stirs even more violence. By accepting his suffering and offering forgiveness, Jesus broke the primary cycle of violence. The Gospels proclaim that the powers of evil, though continuing their effects today, were decisively defeated on the cross. The resurrection of Jesus launches the reign of God, which will be fully complete upon Jesus' return. We are now offered a new path for being human by which, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we may partner with God to create new cycles of life and hope.

Today's Readings: Mt 21:1-11; Isa 50:4-7; Ps 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24; Phil 2:6-11; Mt 26:14 — 27:66 [27:11-54]

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