



APRIL 2, 2023 | PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

HOLY FAMILY PARISH

312 Tazewell Avenue, Tazewell, VA 24651

(276) 988-4626 | parishoffice@holyfamilyswva.org | facebook: search Holy Family SWVA

ST. THERESA'S

312 Tazewell Ave.
Tazewell, VA 24651

ST. ELIZABETH'S

160 Merrick Lane
Pocahontas, VA 24635

ST. MARY'S

1122 Farmer Street
Richlands, VA 24641

ST. JOSEPH'S

1007 Independence Rd.
Grundy, VA 24614

Untie them and bring them to me; I need them.

HAVE YOU ever experienced an urgent need or a situation that does not give room for an alternative approach or "plan B"? If you have not, you may be temporarily lucky. Due to our human limitations, we often fall into some needful situations that often overwhelm us. However, some needs are material while others are spiritual and more important. In the ceremony of Palm Sunday, we shall see our Lord expressing an urgent need for a donkey and a colt to convey him to Jerusalem. Why did he make the specific request of these beasts of burden en route to the site of his Passion and death?

Today is Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord. We have arrived at the doorway to Holy Week. The ceremony of today begins with our Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. This entry is a very special one, and we are invited to reflect deeply on the events that preceded this entry into Jerusalem

and how they relate to us and this holy season.

From the Gospel Reading at the opening ceremony (Matt. 21:1-11), we learn that our Lord made a very specific and unusual request for a donkey (also known as an ass) and a colt from a specific village near Bethphage. Notably, the donkey and the colt were tied to a tree. The instruction is that the two disciples that were sent should untie them and bring them urgently to him.

The donkey could be an older version of the colt and they represent the old and the young, at least physically. Spiritually, the donkey and the colt stand for the souls of both the old and the young that are tied to the tree of sin. The tree in the narrative represents the tree at the middle of the garden in the Book of Genesis (3:3). Our Lord's journey into Jerusalem is to tie our sins to the tree of redemption—the Cross. We could also see the donkey and the colt as reminiscent of Adam and Eve who erred at the Eden tree and whose disobedience would receive attention at the tree of Calvary.

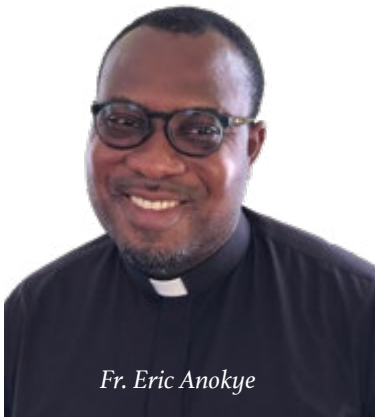
Our Lord's journey into Jerusalem on a donkey shows that he came to carry our burdens, exemplified by the action of the beasts of burden (donkey) moving our Lord into the city of Jerusalem, which is the location of his Passion and death. Of course, we know that donkeys are only used to carry loads, not human beings. This confirms our Lord's invitation (Matt. 11:28):

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

This entry into Jerusalem would not be triumphant without the donkey and the colt and that was why our Lord could place a note of urgency on them. Drawing from the narrative, our Lord's passion requires the urgent need of our souls for which the Cross stands at Calvary. The entry was joyful though the mission was painful (the Passion). The joyous entry shows our Lord's love and urgent need to save our souls. He was joyfully looking at the victory over death.

Our Lord triumphantly moved to Jerusalem from Bethphage riding on a donkey. In the same way, but more significantly, he would carry our souls triumphantly from the darkness of sin into the light of divine forgiveness and liberation (Col.1:13). The Passion of the Lord is nothing compared to the redemption it will produce at the dawn of Easter.

Another important lesson today is the reverse reaction of the crowd towards our Lord. The crowd that shouted "Hosanna to the Son of David" at the triumphant entry would be the same crowd that would say "Crucify him!" during the trial and judgment at Gabbatha. This reverse action is representative of our rela-



Fr. Eric Anokye

tionship with God. We often agree to walk with the Lord at one point and another point we deny him and even “crucify him” by our sins and disobedience.

With the event of today, we have entered the week of Passion. The Lord, having entered triumphantly into Jerusalem, is now carrying the burden of our souls to the Cross of Calvary where we shall have our liberation by his death and resurrection.

May we continue the procession from the entry into Jerusalem to the entry into his Passion, death and resurrection. May we not repeat the actions of Peter who denied his master (John 18:15-27). May we not repeat the actions of Judas who betrayed the Lord (Luke 22:48). May we not repeat the condemning actions of Pilate and the authorities (John 18:28-40). And may we not, like most of the disciples, abandon the Lord during his Passion (Mark 14:50). May we rather, like the Blessed Virgin Mary and few others, stay close to him at the foot of the Cross at his death hour (John 19: 25-26) so that we can also rise with him. I wish you a passionate Palm Sunday.



PASTOR

Fr. Eric Anokye
eanokye@richmonddiocese.org
(276) 385-7312

OFFICE MANAGER/ BOOKKEEPER

Lydia St. Peter

OFFICE HOURS

Mon–Fri 9:30AM – 2:30PM

Please call the parish office to make arrangements for the **Sacraments of Baptism, Anointing of the Sick or Holy Matrimony** as well as funerals. **Reconciliation** is available from 30 minutes before a scheduled Mass.

MASS TIMES

SATURDAY

4PM – St. Joseph's

6PM – St. Mary's

SUNDAY

9AM – St. Elizabeth's

11:30AM – St. Theresa's

TUESDAY & FRIDAY

10AM – St. Theresa's

Cover image:

Carl Bloch, *The Last Supper*,
Late 19th century

Fighting Acedia: Choosing God at All Times

By Father Harrison Ayre, simplycatholic.com

It happens all the time: we know what we must do, and yet we fail to do it. Then we cast blame: tiredness, a lack of motivation, a need to rest from a busy life, a lack of inspiration, being easily distracted or a whole host of other scapegoats. What we do not understand is that this is often not rooted so much in the above excuses we too often make, but it's rooted, rather, in a deeper spiritual condition, what the Desert Fathers called *acedia*.

Acedia is the Christian East's way of talking about sloth. But it is much more than a simple laziness or lack of desire to do anything worthwhile. It is an infliction of the soul that attacks desire: we listen to it and become unable to follow through on our intentions. Because we don't act on intentions, we feel dull, numb and spiritually dead. To put the definition in a more pithy fashion: *acedia* creates in us the inability to choose the good.

Let's break this down a bit more. Desire resides both in the soul and in the body. And *acedia* attacks desire. But it doesn't misplace desire—as can happen with other sins such as lust, greed and avarice. *Acedia* is more subtle: it attempts to reduce desire. Instead of misguiding desire, it wants us to not experience desire at all. It creates a state of soul in which we simply would prefer to not choose anything at all. Hence, *acedia* gets expressed in its more popular form known as sloth—a laziness, an inability or lack of desire to choose to do the task or duty of the moment.

But *acedia* can also take us in the opposite direction. In an attempt to reduce our desire, it fills our mind with the idea that busyness is a good thing. By doing many tasks, it dulls our senses to the essential tasks of life. By being busy with activities, hobbies—all which seem good!—the *acediac* avoids the duties that are essential to life: the duties that build up his vocation and the duties of seeking out God through prayer and liturgy.

Ultimately, *acedia*, as a spiritual malady, creates in us a spiritual malaise. By reducing our desire, it limits our capacity for God. It inspires us to not choose the duty of the moment but instead to choose whatever

is self pleasing—whether we avoid the task through laziness or busyness. By doing so, we reduce our desire for God, who reveals and makes himself present to us through our tasks that build up our vocation. To avoid the duties of the day, to avoid choosing the good, we avoid choosing God. The choice for God is never direct, but is always mediated through the duties and responsibilities of life. Hence why *acedia* is one of the most dangerous and subversive sins of our age: it creates in us a spiritual malaise that slowly dulls our sense for perceiving and choosing God.

Taking the above general overview into account, it must be noted that this sin, though it is more spiritual in nature since it deals with desire, has a remarkably long litany of practical tools to overcome it. The key is rediscovering that one has a freedom to choose the good, and orienting actions around this. The following tips are not exhaustive. And they all must be read in the light of building new habits. This means that, at times, there will be failures, at times you will still give in to *acedia* and choose the bad instead of the good. Do not beat yourself up! Building new habits in the fight against *acedia* is akin to training for a marathon. You do not begin to train for a marathon by running a marathon. You start with a few blocks, and even then may have limited success. So it is with this sin: start with one thing, grow in it, and then move on to another habit to build or vice to fight.

Schedule Your Life

So often we can go about our days listlessly. It is easy to put off checking our emails at work, getting back to phone calls, spending time in prayer, etc. By the time the end of the day comes, we see all the tasks we failed to do.

While people may be able to schedule their life to differing degrees according to their state of life, a schedule is a great way to keep ourselves accountable. A schedule helps remind us what we are to choose in a given moment.

When building your schedule, the best thing to

do is to ensure the day begins with prayer. If you don't have a regular prayer routine together, choose a 15-minute period for the same time every day—mornings are encouraged, though. Choose those essential duties of each day and try to fit them in at the same time. When you get to work, perhaps spend the first 20 minutes every day with emails as another example. Be flexible and patient with yourself, but you'll find that if you do the same thing at the same time every day, the task gets much easier to choose to do. Ritual can be greatly to your benefit.

Manual Task

The Desert Fathers loved to say that one of the great cures to acedia is manual labor, such as yard work, chores around the house, or working on a hobby project or doing something with our hands, etc. Such work helps us discover that we need not give in to our emotions in front of a task, but that we really can, with God's grace, gain control over our bodies to offer them to God in worship in all things.

There are many other tools to achieve victory over acedia. Remain patient with yourself, choose one thing to improve at a time and be gentle with yourself when failure happens, because it will happen. Choosing the good of the moment, even if it is something we do not want to do, will begin to open our hearts. And we will begin more deeply to God and to see his goodness in all things, that in every action, it is ultimately God whom we are choosing.

The Donkey

By G.K. Chesterton

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born.

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

mass intentions

Date	Intention
4/1 SATURDAY	
4PM	Robert F. & Nancy C. Baxter ☩
6PM	Marcus Maybanks ☩
4/2 SUNDAY	
9AM	Ron & Tony Lambert ☩
11:30AM	Michael & Bridget Rynne ☩

stewardship of treasure

Donations Received as of March 26 (Week 39)		
CHURCH	ATTENDANCE	OFFERINGS
St. Joseph's	10	\$190
St. Elizabeth's	20	\$525
St. Mary's	21	\$675
St. Theresa's	40	\$828
Total	91	\$2,218
Outside Donations		\$50
Year to Date Received		\$113,854
Goal		\$105,000
Ahead/Behind Goal		+ \$8,854

OUTSIDE DONORS—THANK YOU!

Mineral, VA donor: \$50

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES COLLECTION:

St. Elizabeth's: \$95
St. Mary's: \$100
St. Theresa's: \$23

ST. MARY'S BACKPACK PROGRAM:

Clinch Valley Medical Center: \$80
Richlands donors: \$300

please pray for

Louise Serreno*	Natalie Dodge
Gerry Hankins	Roger Empson
Clarence Moore	Dreama Ritter
Lexi Cox	Marco Warner
Sarah Wall	Chris Lambert
Tammy Bennett	Virginia Dy
Margaret Wasilewski	Mary Muncy
Nic Ulate	Cindy Lambert
Frannie & Rayburn Minton	Jean St. Clair
Sue Bailey	Helen Petro
Christian Lambert	Clinard Coleman
Shane Neal	Joan Harrison
Archbishop John Kwofie	Joe & Yvonne Blevins
Pete Belcher	Kyle Brown
Lucas Boyd	Bobby Cole
Ralph Heldreth	Jeffrey Parkhurst
Chris Jessie	Fr. Dan Brady
Leo Brown	Sarah Walters
Carolina Ferrare	Everly Duns
Junior Aiken	Amelia Proffit
Jeanne Hash	Maurice Law
Lara Marshall	Zac Carter
Carol & Jim Shumate	Dennis & Frances Savage
Andrew Satmary	Nancy Jo Testerman
Glenn Harrison	Donnie Neal
Donna Petro	Josh Cornwell
Christian Marshall	John Shumate
Tina Rocchetti	Seth Waddell
Alice Godin	Doug Vance
Randy Snyder	Russ Hatfield
Bryan Gunter	Connie Pace
Michael Beavers	Lynn Jones

council members

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FINANCE COUNCIL:

Kathy & Bob Buchanan, Randy Bolling, Doug Vance, Anne Danko, Jim Talbert, Jackie Shawver, Lydia St. Peter

parish news & events

Note: There will be no daily Mass next week!

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE , APRIL 6 – 9

Thursday	7PM Tazewell
Friday	3PM Pocahontas 6PM Tazewell
Saturday	4PM Grundy 6PM Richlands
Sunday	9AM Pocahontas 11:30AM Tazewell

Annual Diocesan Appeal Update: We surpassed our \$7790 goal and have collected \$6,735 to date with \$3,100 in recurring gift projections.

Thank you so much for your generosity!

“*Christ* became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Because of this, *God* greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name.” – Phil 2:8-9

birthdays & anniversaries:

4: Alvin & Cynthia Angcanan (Anniversary) | **6:** Lanh Pham



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