

# LIVING FAITH

## PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD



### THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY

#### Matthew 21:1-11

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.'

### TAKING THE GOSPEL HOME

The actual gospel reading for Palm Sunday is the Passion Narrative from the *Gospel According to Mark*. However, the liturgy today begins with a short rite to initiate the whole of Holy Week, which concludes with the Paschal Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday), marking the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus the Christ. That short rite includes the gospel account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Mark's account is more subdued than that of the other gospel-writers. His focus is so fixed on the Passion of Jesus that his Gospel has been called a Passion Narrative with a long introduction.

We might note that Jesus could have avoided going to Jerusalem; however, he chooses to take the bull by the horns; he enters Jerusalem publicly in a procession. He will confront the powers that are set against him. Jesus will make himself vulnerable to suffering, and he will do so in solidarity with all who suffer and for love of all humanity. "Jesus is God's love in fragile human flesh and bone; he is God's passion, God's passion overwhelming love, God's risky adventure." (Denis McBride)

At his Last Supper with the disciples, taking bread and wine, Jesus says, "This is my Body. This is my Blood. ... Do this in memory of me." And Christians have done so ever since. We remember the suffering and death of Jesus; in doing that we remember all suffering. Remembering that Jesus was sustained by a power beyond human control, we are strengthened in the Eucharist to protest against suffering, oppression, injustice....

### TALKING WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Describe what the word *suffering* means to you. Give examples of suffering – your own or that of others.

Thinking of the whole life and ministry of Jesus (not only his passion) what did Jesus suffer? What might we learn from the suffering of Jesus to help us deal with our suffering and the suffering of others in the world?



# The Triumphal Entry

Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, "Hosanna!"  
 "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" Mark 11:9 (NIV)

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.



E	N	Q	G	Z	M	R	T	I	B	S	Y	K	O	L	W	F	V	H	U	C	J	A	P	X	D
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

- 18-9-15-15-23-4-1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 21-14-15-8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 21-15-14-23-13-11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7-14-23-26 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11-24-7-1-23-26 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10-7-23-2-21-19-1-11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 19-14-11-23-2-2-23 \_\_\_\_\_
- 19-9-4-19-1-11-8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 19-1-23-18-1-2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10-15-1-11-11-1-26 \_\_\_\_\_

COLT	HIGHEST	BRANCHES	HEAVEN	SPREAD
CLOAKS	ROAD	HOSANNA	BLESSED	VILLAGE

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## HOLY WEEK

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## IS THIS STORY TOO DIFFICULT FOR CHILDREN?

Many people debate about taking children to Mass during Holy Week. Certainly, the Liturgies can be longer—Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil. Some ask, is this story too hard for children? After all, even though Palm Sunday starts out pretty joyful, in fact, Jesus' last days were filled with betrayal, loneliness, doubt, pain and violence.

But, the story of Jesus' suffering and death is not as unfamiliar to children as we may like to believe. Most children know pain. Some children know death. They know what it's like to feel lonely, to feel afraid, to feel bullied, to feel hurt. We need to tell the story in an age-appropriate way, describing how people were mean to Jesus and eventually hurt him, and how Jesus could have run away, but he didn't because he loved people too much to abandon them. This story connects with children's own pain and lets them know that they need not experience it alone. It's a story that also tells them it does get better, that there is hope beyond pain, and that God doesn't abandon them in the dark but leads them to the light. That's a story every child longs for. And I suspect, every adult too.

The other important aspect of the story of Holy Week is that it does not end in the tomb. The most important part of the story is that Jesus rose from the dead. There is always hope. The resurrection of Jesus opens up the possibility of eternal life for all of us. With Jesus, it's never a question of "is this all there is?" There is always a way through pain, sorrow and loss. Jesus is there, hands outstretched, offering hope. And whenever it seems hard to find Jesus, look for His helpers. Whenever there is misfortune, the helpers of Jesus are there, hands and hearts outstretched, offering comfort and help.



### *Share Love, Share Lent: Paschal progression.*

Did you know that Development and Peace has organized a Lenten campaign every year since 1968?

Keeping up with the tradition, this year's campaign, *Share Love, Share Lent*, invites you to a final week of family fun, communal reflection, global solidarity and prayer.

**Don't miss our special campaign Way of the Cross!**

Catch the details and contribute at [devp.org/lent](http://devp.org/lent).



# IN THE CHURCH CALENDAR THIS WEEK THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD- MARCH 25



## The Angelus

THE ANGEL OF THE LORD DECLARED UNTO MARY:  
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

*Hail Mary...*

Behold the handmaid of the Lord:

Be it done to me according to your word.

*Hail Mary...*

And the Word was made flesh:

And dwelt among us.

*Hail Mary...*

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God,  
That we may be made worthy of  
the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord,  
your grace into our hearts, that we  
to whom the Incarnation of Christ, your Son, was made  
known by the message of an angel, may be brought by  
his Passion and Cross to the glory of the Resurrection,  
through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.



This image of the window dedicated to the Annunciation was taken by Robert and Lynn Young in 2019. This lovely window can be found in the Basilica-Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in St. John's, NL on the clerestory (upper) level, west side. It was crafted by Louis Lichtenfeldt-Koch in Beauvais, France in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The feast of the Annunciation celebrates and recalls the visit of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, during which he told her that she would be the mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is celebrated on March 25th each year.

More importantly, since it occurs 9 months before the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day, the Annunciation marks the actual incarnation of Jesus Christ - the moment that Jesus was conceived and that the Son of God became the son of the Virgin.

The festival celebrates two things:

- God's action in entering the human world as Jesus in order to save humanity
- Humanity's willing acceptance of God's action in Mary's freely given acceptance of the task of being the Mother of God