

**The Palm Sunday Parade & The Via Dolorosa:  
The Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem VS The Lone Walk to Calvary**

**“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord.” Luke 19:38  
“Away with this man, and release Barabbas...Crucify, crucify him” Luke 23:18, 21.**

**1. Why did Jesus have to die?**

**A. Jesus had to die because God is the way God is. God is love and love does not force it will upon any.**

**B. Jesus had to die because the world is the way the world is. The world feeds on power, terror and dominance. Nevertheless, Jesus’ death, by God’s action, was not the end of God’s story.**

**2. How does Jesus’ death pay for my sins?**

**A, Jesus’ death is both an example of the way love behaves that stops retaliatory violence and a sacramental or symbolic means through which we can be transformed and become transformers of a world dominated by power and terror.**

**Today, I will seek to show the stark contrast of the Palm Sunday message.**

**He rode into Jerusalem on a borrowed beast of burden, a symbol of royal humility. He was betrayed with a kiss from a friend for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave gored by a bull. He was accused at a mocked trial, illegally held by the Sanhedrin. He was convicted and sentenced by an acquiescent Roman Governor to satisfy an angry crowd. He was crucified between two insurgents on the city dump outside of Jerusalem. He was buried in a borrowed grave in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was treated like the millions of homeless, destitute or thrown away peoples of the earth, both past and present. And yet, his life, death and resurrection shook the earth and began a new era in human history.**

**His birth became the dividing line between the periods of history. His teachings brought enlightenment to millions. His divine powers brought healing to the nations. His death occurred on the darkest day that the earth has ever known, yet he illumines every dark crevice and the black holes of the universe. His Resurrection brought hope to the hopeless. His birth, life, death and resurrection brought salvation to fallen humanity. And upon his return, his judgement will balance the scales of justice and usher in a time of peace on the earth, good will toward humans.**

**Behold him who rides this day on a Donkey into Jerusalem, the city of peace, the city of blood, the city of death to the prophets. *“Ride on! Ride on in majesty! Hark! All the tribes hosanna cry; thy humble beast pursue his road with palms and scattered garments strowed.”* Hymn 156.**

**Good morning! It is good for us to be here to celebrate another Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday is a day of stark contrasts. The Palm Sunday Gospel celebrates the way the world views success. The Palm Sunday Passion and Easter’s resurrection show the way the church celebrates victory. He lives!. He lives in order that you and I may triumph over the cross and experience new life. He lives! Only a loving God can bring triumph out of defeat, new life out of the grave and good from the horrible, inhumane and unjust bad death of Jesus at Calvary. He lives!**

**The crowd that gathered on the Mount of Olives was a friendly one from Galilee and the local villages of Bethany and Bethphage. Some in the crowd that gathered in the city of Jerusalem were hostile, indifferent and lovers of spectacles. Others observed with fear, powerlessness and horror as the events unfolded.**

**The Palm Sunday crowd included the sleep-filled disciples at Gethsemane; the arresting soldiers; the Sanhedrin; Pilate; Herod; two thieves on crosses, the women and believing crowd that came with him from Galilee. Each group would play its respective part until the threat to the Roman and Jewish authorities had been vanquished by the killing of the messenger, the Christ of God. The existential question is, "Among which group would I have identified had I been there? How many times have I watched while the innocent are unjustly treated and I kept silent?" We can never know the difference that one dissenting voice can make. O that we could but muster the courage to just say the forbidden word spoken by Caesar of the Planet of Apes. That forbidden word spoken in protest against the cruelty and brutality that men were heaping upon the apes was, "No, No More!"**

**Thanks be to God, a way of salvation has been prepared for each and all of us. For on the third day after Jesus' death, God raised Jesus up and exalted him to the highest heavens. God crowned him with glory. God gave him back his Divinity with a significant difference. The difference was that human essence had been rescued. A pathway to the throne of God for all humanity has been blazoned. Redeemed humanity has been taken into the very domain of the Godhead for the first time and one day we shall stand face to face in the magnificent presence of God in the Ages of Ages.**

**For the mean time, we have an opportunity this week to walk with Jesus from this Palm Sunday Processional and Passion; through Maundy Thursday's Foot Washing, Eucharist, Stripping of the Altar and Good Friday's celebration of the Way of The Cross. Then on the third day, we shall gather once again for the festive Easter Celebration of the Resurrection of Christ Jesus. He lives! Thank God Almighty, He Lives!**

**Let us pray. O God, through Palm Sunday, the passion of Holy Week and the Easter Celebration, you teach us to trust in the faithfulness of your love and goodness for and to all of us: Now teach us so to walk through the valley of the shadow of death that we may have hope and confidence in your undying love in the midst of our trials. Then, may we rise with Christ on this up-and-coming Easter and every Easter until He brings us fully into your kingdom; through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord. Amen.**