

Sunday, Apr 13, 2025

His kingdom is not of this world

Luke's Passion story doesn't mention palms. Instead, it talks about the crowd spreading their cloaks. Only John's gospel refers to palms. Mark and Matthew speak of branches. What's going on? Laying down a cloak—the most valuable piece of clothing a person in the ancient world owned—was an act of homage, treatment for a king. Branches recall the rededication of the Jerusalem Temple described in the Books of Maccabees, treatment for a messiah. Jesus was a king and messiah but to walk with him toward his Passion is to embrace the fact that his Kingdom is a place of humility and sacrifice.

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

Procession: Luke 19:28-40 (37); Mass: Isaiah 50:4-7; Philippians 2:6-11; Luke 22:14-23:56 or 23:1-49 (38). *"Christ Jesus . . . humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death."*

Monday, Apr 14, 2025

Tender your heart

Images of Jesus and Mary abound, but one in particular speaks volumes about the compassion and affection that characterized their relationship: Our Lady of Tenderness, also known as the Virgin Eleousa. The iconic image shows the child Jesus nestled in his mother's embrace, his cheek touching hers. It not only warms our hearts but calls us to be people of tenderness. "The heart enveloped in the tenderness of God passes that tenderness around indiscriminately," says Catholic author Brennan Manning, "making no distinction between the worthy and the unworthy." Put tenderness to the test in your own life and let others know that they are loved, however inwardly bruised or broken they may be.

MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Isaiah 42:1-7; John 12:1-11 (257). *"A bruised reed he shall not break . . . Until he establishes justice on the earth."*

Tuesday, Apr 15, 2025

Open the way for light

Jesus makes it clear to Peter and the rest of his disciples that they will follow him. Following Jesus, the light of the world, is the call of all Christians. What does it mean to follow the Lord? The prophet Micah puts it simply: To act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God (6:8). Unsure you're equal to the task? Take small steps each day toward the light by acknowledging a mistake, forgiving an offense, or letting go of an argument. Soon light will shine from you.

TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Isaiah 49:1-6; John 13:21-33, 36-38 (258). *"I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."*

Wednesday, Apr 16, 2025

Don't shortchange yourself

Human nature being what it is, it doesn't take much for us to throw our good intentions to the wind. It only took Judas 30 pieces of silver to turn on Jesus. But what seemed like a good payday did not serve Judas well. Lent is supposed to be a time when we allow God to transform us and increase our capacity for love. Start by listening to others. "If you do not close your ear to others," says Saint Peter Chrysologus, "you open God's ear to yourself."

WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Isaiah 50:4-9a; Matthew 26:14-25 (259). *"What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?"*

Thursday, Apr 17, 2025

Unlike any other night

Tonight, Christians worldwide commemorate Jesus' Last Supper, with adaptations of the traditional Seder meal. Key elements of the Seder include lamb (pesach), unleavened bread (matzoh), bitter herbs (moror), green herbs dipped in salt water, and haroseth, a mixture of chopped apples, nuts, cinnamon, and wine that represents the mortar that Jews used to construct palaces during their Egyptian servitude. Wine is dipped into a common bowl for the four cups of blessing, representing "four different words for redemption, spoken by God to Moses." This Christian adaptation of the Seder not only connects us to our Jewish roots but also invites us to reflect on the profound act of redemption that God offered to the world through Jesus.

THURSDAY OF HOLY WEEK (HOLY THURSDAY);
EVENING MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-15 (39). *"This day shall be a memorial feast for you, which all your generations shall celebrate."*

Friday, Apr 18, 2025

Prepare for a great finish

One of the reasons Jesus was able to die such an inwardly peaceful death is that he understood fully and deeply that he was the Son of God. He lived in keeping with that knowledge and accomplished all that he had come here to do. Thus, Jesus was able to die gracefully, without regret, and even forgive those who had crucified him. We are all going to die someday. But rare is the person who, like Jesus, remembers this fact and draws inspiration from it each day. Today and throughout the Easter season we might practice the habit of asking, "What do I want to be true at the end of my life?" and live accordingly.

FRIDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION (GOOD FRIDAY);
DAY OF ABSTINENCE

Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42 (40). *"When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit."*

Saturday, Apr 19, 2025

Let in the light

During the dramatic service of light at the beginning of the Easter Vigil, the priest lights the paschal candle with these words: "May the light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds." What is the darkness in your heart and mind? Now is the time to let go of the hurt, resentment, and anger you feel. Now is the time to allow the light of Christ to shine through you. Jesus suffered, died, and rose again so that you, personally, would experience freedom from all of the burdens you carry—so that you, personally, would know that salvation is yours. Now is the time to unchain your heart and mind.

HOLY SATURDAY; EASTER VIGIL

Genesis 1:1-2:2 or Genesis 1:1, 26-31a; Genesis 22:1-18 or Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18; Exodus 14:15-15:1; Isaiah 54:5-14; Isaiah 55:1-11; Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4:4; Ezekiel 36:16-17a, 18-28; Romans 6:3-11; Luke 24:1-12 (41). *"We know that our old self was crucified with him . . . that we might no longer be in slavery to sin."*

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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