

Palm Sunday – Jesus is Welcomed to Jerusalem

Matthew 21: 6-9 The disciples went and did exactly what Jesus told them to do. They led the donkey and colt out, laid some of their clothes on them, and Jesus mounted. Nearly all the people in the crowd threw their garments down on the road, giving him a royal welcome. Others cut branches from the trees and threw them down as a welcome mat. Crowds went ahead and crowds followed, all of them calling out, "Hosanna to David's son!" "Blessed is he who comes in God's name!" "Hosanna in highest heaven!"

Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem by crowds. He was cheered and was loved and famous. We know now that just 5 days later the same crowds would put him to death. Fame can be fleeting.

Have you ever found yourself wanting to be famous? Wanting people to shout your name? Do you think it's better to be adored by thousands or to be loved by one?

Please pray together:

Dear God, please give me the wisdom seek your love over other's approvals.



Monday – Jesus Clears the Temple

Luke 19: 45-46 Going into the Temple he began to throw out everyone who had set up shop, selling everything and anything. He said, "It's written in Scripture, My house is a house of prayer; You have turned it into a religious bazaar."

Jesus was not happy at what the people had done to the house of worship.

Do you think he would be happy in God's house today? What can you do to make your worship more pleasing to Jesus?

Please pray together:

Dear God, help me to focus more on worshipping you than on material distractions.



Tuesday – Judas Betrays Jesus

Matthew 26: 14-16 That is when one of the Twelve, the one named Judas Iscariot, went to the cabal of high priests and said, "What will you give me if I hand him over to you?" They settled on thirty silver pieces. He began looking for just the right moment to hand him over.

Judas, one of the 12 apostles and Jesus' friend betrayed him for 30 pieces of silver. Have you ever been hurt by a friend? Have you ever betrayed Jesus for money or another material object?

Please pray together:

Dear God, please help me to cherish and grow my faith.



Wednesday – Jesus Goes off the Grid

There is no reference to what Jesus did on Wednesday of Holy week. We can assume it was a day of prayer and preparation for him. Perhaps a day of social fasting.

In today's world people of all ages are connected to social media. For some people it is a welcome connection to the outside world, for others it can become the most important thing in their lives.

Do you use social media? Do you ever take a break? Do you need to take break?

Please pray together:

Dear God, please give me the strength to have control over the distractions of today's world.



Thursday – Jesus Washes the Apostles' Feet.

John 13: 3-7 Jesus knew that the Father had put him in complete charge of everything, that he came from God and was on his way back to God. So, he got up from the supper table, set aside his robe, and put on an apron. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, drying them with his apron. When he got to Simon Peter, Peter said, "Master, you wash *my* feet?" Jesus answered, "You don't understand now what I'm doing, but it will be clear enough to you later."

It was a pretty big deal to wash someone's feet in Jesus' day. It would be like your Pastor coming to you and saying I need you to help guide me in a spiritual matter. It would be like your mom or dad putting you in charge of dinner for the next week.

How do you show your respect and love to others? Do you quietly whisper to yourself how you feel, or do you shout it from the rooftops for all to hear?

Please pray together:

Dear God, give me the courage to shout "I love you!"



Thursday - the Last Supper

Luke 22:7-23 Jesus and the twelve sat down for the Passover meal. He was eager to eat with them before suffering began. He broke bread and said, "This is my body given to you. Eat it as a way of remembering me." He shared a cup of wine and said, "This is my blood. It is poured for you as a new covenant between God and his people." Jesus told them that one of them would betray him, and then the apostles argued about who would do such a thing.

Jesus shared the Last Supper with the apostles so they would continue to remember his sacrifice by sharing the elements of bread and wine. We continue to share Communion, remembering that Jesus died to free us from sin and death.

Have you ever sacrificed something so another would be better off? How did you feel? How might you feel if your sacrifice was not understood?

Please pray together:

Dear God, refresh our bodies, minds, hearts, and souls of the reason we share Communion- to remember Jesus' sacrifice to ensure that we too can have eternal life in his kingdom.



Friday – Jesus is Condemned to Death

Matthew 15: 14-15 Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" They only shouted the louder, "Crucify him." So, Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

An innocent is about to be killed, and the laws of the land will not protect him. Racism leads to many forms of injustice: sometimes death, sometimes imprisonment, sometimes closed doors and lost opportunities. We may not be in the crowd cheering the evil deed, but are we indifferent? It is easy to remain silent even though we may have an opportunity to speak up. Do we object to an inappropriate "joke"? Will we be like Pilate and the crowd, or will we use our opportunities to create opportunities for others at school, in our workplace, in our community?

Please pray together:

Dear Jesus, help us to use the opportunities we have to speak out against the injustices around us, knowing that you desire justice for all.



Friday – Jesus Carries the Cross and is Nailed to It

Mark 15:16-32 Before Jesus was led away, soldiers spit on him, mocked him and pierced his head with a crown of thorns. As Jesus carried the cross to Golgotha, the soldiers made Simon of Cyrene carry the cross for him. The soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross with a sign saying, "This is the King of the Jews". The Roman soldiers and people passing by insulted and mocked him saying, "You said you could destroy and rebuild the temple in 3 days, so save yourself." And, "If he is the Messiah let him come down from the cross. Then we will see and believe."

What an about face from Palm Sunday! Jesus endured being treated cruelly and tormented. Yet, Christ accepted what God asked him to do.

When have you had trouble doing what you know God wants you to do? Have you felt like this burden was too much, or too hard to accept?

Please pray together:

Dear God –Just as Christ carried our burdens on his back, giving his all for us, may we pick up the cross doing our part to serve the Lord and accept God's will.



Friday/Saturday – Jesus Dies and is Placed in the Tomb

John 19: 38-41 Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. He came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus who brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it with the spices, in strips of linen, in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. They laid Jesus there.

Death without burial was the intended end for the crucified criminal signifying his worthlessness as a human being. Joseph of Arimathea, then, shows courage in approaching Pilot for permission to bury Jesus. He shows tenderness in preparing Jesus' body with spices and linens. And he shows respect in laying Jesus to rest quickly, as was the Jewish custom. Joseph shows us so much about being devoted to Jesus.

Please pray together:

Dear Jesus, may we, like Joseph, show our devotion to you through courage, respect and tenderness.



Sunday – Jesus Rises from the Dead

Matthew 28: 5-7 Then the angel spoke the women, "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here. He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come see where his body was lying. And now go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember what I have told you."

Hallelujah! He lives! Imagine the confusion felt by Mary Magdalene and Mary when the tomb was open and empty. The angel told them to believe in something that was seemingly impossible. Perhaps we could call this blind faith.

When have you experienced blind faith, believing in something when there is no or conflicting evidence for the outcome? Who or what helped you to believe in what you could not see or control?

Please pray together:

Dear God – Through the resurrection of your Son, you have given those who believe eternal life and everlasting love. May we continue to sing our praises to you and turn to you in challenging times, our invisible, yet always with us, God.

