

SUNDAY OF THE PASSION: PALM SUNDAY April 2, 2023

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INTRODUCTION

Today's liturgy begins with a palm procession, commemorating Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. At the close of worship, the tone of the service changes as we meditate upon Jesus' passion and death. Because this story is so central to our faith, we hear the entire passion reading today from the Gospel of Matthew. Though Jesus is obedient even unto death on the cross, he is exalted by God. We gather to remember his offering for the life of the world, and to be fed by his life-giving mercy. This holy week will culminate in the celebration of the Three Days of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL: Matthew 21:1-11

The holy gospel according to Saint Matthew,

Glory to you, O Lord.

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 fulfill 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." The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

BLESSING OF PALMS

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. We praise you, O God,
for redeeming the world through our Savior Jesus Christ.
Today he entered the holy city in triumph and was proclaimed
messiah and king by those who spread garments and branches along his way.
Bless these branches and those who carry them.
Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross,
so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter into life with you;
through the same Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

PROCESSION AND PROCESSIONAL HYMN

Let us go forth in peace,

In the name of Christ. Amen.

"All Glory, Laud, and Honor" (stanzas 1, 3 & 5) #344

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Sovereign God, you have established your rule in the human heart through the servanthood of Jesus Christ. By your Spirit, keep us in the joyful procession of those who with their tongues confess Jesus as Lord and with their lives praise him as Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

If you, Lord, should mark iniquities, who could stand?

But there is forgiveness with you so that you may be revered.

Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Rock of our salvation,

we confess that we live in opposition to your gracious will for us.

We have failed to be a blessing to others

by turning our backs on the needs of the poor,

and by exploiting your creation without regard for those who come after us.

**By our sins, we are exiled from your presence our bones are dried up,
and our hope is lost.**

Breathe your Spirit on us, O God, that we may live.

God's love is shown to us in that while we still were sinners, Christ died for us. In the name and for the sake of Christ, I say to you: All your sins are forgiven.

In the waters of baptism you were joined with Christ, reborn as children of God, and anointed with the Holy Spirit. You are free to live as God's people in the world. **Amen.**

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song

EPISTLE READING: Philippians 2:5–11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

THE MEDITATION “Blessed is the One” Pastor Phil Wold

HYMN OF THE DAY “Lift High the Cross” (stanzas 1 & 2) #660

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

THE PEACE IS SHARED

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

THANKSGIVING

God gives us all good things. We respond in gratitude

THE OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. **Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

THE LORD’S PRAYER

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

BLESSING

SENDING SONG “Come with Us, O Blessed Jesus” # 501

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD

The reading of the Passion Story
from the Gospel of Saint Matthew

The Passion Hymn “O Sacred Head Now Wounded” #351
We will sing one stanza at a time, in the midst of the Passion Reading.

DISMISSAL

Marked with the cross of Christ,
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

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