

Read

Matthew 21:1-11

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18,
19-20, 23-24)

Philippians 2:6-11

Matthew 26:14-27:66
or 27:11-54

LIVING THE WORD

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

April 5, 2020



REFLECTION

The interaction between Jesus and Judas at the Last Supper is haunting. Jesus knows there is a betrayer is at hand, present at the table and sharing in the meal. Even so, Judas continues his ruse of ignorance and innocence to the point of publically proclaiming that he would never be the one to turn on Jesus.

Judas must have done a good job of keeping his betrayal plans secret. Surely if the others gathered at table would have known about the disloyalty in advance, they would have done something to Judas to prevent the betrayal. Maybe they would have locked him up in a room so he could not carry out his plan. Maybe they would have killed him. Either way, it seems that the disciples did not know what was about to unfold.

Much differently, and not unexpectedly, Jesus knows exactly what is going on. While Judas could hide his traitorous side from his fellow brothers and sisters, it is impossible for Judas to hide any part of himself from God. The same is true for us. God knows everything about us. God knows our comings and goings. God knows our strengths and our weakness. God knows our successes and failures.



ACTION

When do we hide our true selves from others? When do we try to hide our true selves from God? Of course we do not reveal everything about ourselves to every person we meet; that would be imprudent. However, if we never reveal our true selves to anyone, we miss opportunities to grow in relationship with God through others. Consider your daily opportunities to be honest with God and others and make an effort not to hide your true self. Be the incredible person God created you to be.

*“You are mine. . . .
Because you are
precious in my
eyes / and honored,
and I love you.”*



—Isaiah 43:1, 4

? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What are some of the things you need to tell God?
- ❖ How can you grow in transparency with God and others?



April 5, 2020

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

LECTIONARY #37A AND 38A

Matthew 21:1-11

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalms 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

Philippians 2:6-11

Matthew 26:14-27:66 or 27:11-54

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

The joyful reception of Jesus into Jerusalem reminds us that Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection are all fulfillment of the Old Testament. Jesus came and was the culmination of the hope, faith, and prayers of all the Jewish people who believed God's promises to them. As the adopted sons and daughters of the Lord, we rejoice, knowing resurrection is promised!

Q FOCUS: *Jesus enters Jerusalem, and we prepare for him to enter our hearts.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

The coming week is the highest point of the liturgical year, and Easter is the peak of that high point. The entire liturgical year builds for the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. God's promise and our hope comes to reality in this event, remembered in the Triduum. In many parishes, people are initiated into the Church at the Easter Vigil.

Church Teaching Connection

"Jesus enters Jerusalem. The liturgy invites us to share in the joy and celebration of the people who cry out in praise of their Lord; a joy that will fade and leaves a bitter and sorrowful taste by the end of the account of the Passion. This celebration seems to combine stories of joy and suffering, mistakes and successes, which are part of our daily lives as disciples" (Pope Francis, Homily for Palm Sunday, March 25, 2018).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Glory to you, O Word of God, Lord Jesus Christ!

Gospel

Matthew 21:1-11

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

When Jesus and the disciples drew near Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tethered, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them here to me. And if anyone should say anything to you, reply, 'The master has need of them.' Then he will send them at once." This happened so that what had been spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled: / *Say to daughter Zion, / "Behold, your king comes to you, / meek and riding on an*

ass, / and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden." / The disciples went and did as Jesus had ordered them. They brought the ass and the colt and laid their cloaks over them, and he sat upon them. The very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and strewed them on the road. The crowds preceding him and those following kept crying out and saying: / "Hosanna to the Son of David; / blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; / hosanna in the highest." / And when he entered Jerusalem the whole city was shaken and asked, "Who is this?" And the crowds replied, "This is Jesus the prophet, from Nazareth in Galilee."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

"Hosanna to the Son of David; / blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; / hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:9). These words were joyful and fervent ones, shouted by Jesus' followers as he entered the city of Jerusalem. The author of Matthew saw these moments as fulfillments of the Old Testament prophetic writing. In Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem we see these prophetic words being fulfilled. Jerusalem rejoices over Jesus, and we hear cries of joy and devotion to the Lord.

► **How do you show the Lord joy and devotion?**

In this prophetic fulfillment, we hear about Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. Instead of a saddle, the disciples spread their cloaks over the animal. The people lay their cloaks and palms on the ground in front of the processing Jesus. As you know, we receive blessed palms on Palm Sunday in remembrance of people placing palms on the path before Jesus, a gesture that honored the Lord. A

donkey, is not a noble, gallant, impressive animal. They are and were common animals that people used for hard labor. Instead of riding a war or military horse that would show power and prestige, the Lord rode atop a common donkey. He was a not a military Messiah, he was and is a Messiah who saved his people from their sins.

The prophetic fulfillment is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, the fulfillment showed the people of that time exactly who the disciples believed Jesus to be. The Jewish residents in Jerusalem would certainly understand the reference to Zechariah. Secondly, the Gospel accounts were written long after the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and by including the Zechariah reference in the Gospel, the author made clear to the reader that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Messiah for whom Israel had waited for so long. These two reasons give way to the clear understanding that Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of all that Israel had been promised. Every prophet, every hope, every prayer, and every life was lived in hope of this one person, Jesus the Christ, coming from heaven to save his people. The culmination of the people's centuries of hope and faith came to rest on the life, death and Resurrection of this one man.

Like the people of Jerusalem, we are called to rejoice in the coming of our Lord Jesus. We only have palms on Palm Sunday, but what the ancient disciples did with their palms, we must do with our hearts.

► **Have you humbled your hearts before God, recognizing your sins and shortcomings this Lent?**

► **Have you looked at our inaction and turned it to action by showing Christ-like goodness and kindness to others?**

As we prepare for the Resurrection of the Lord, prepare your heart and recall that soon we too can joyfully sing about the Lord's victory.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 166.

Have you prepared your heart, mind, and soul for Holy Week and Easter? What more do you need to do?

In your chosen Lenten discipline, have you been successful? Do you know how you will be able to participate in Holy Week?

The people of Jerusalem shouted, "Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:9). What songs or prayers do you find helpful in praising God?

Act on the Word

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is an ancient form of prayer, meditation and encountering Scripture. The Latin phrase *Lectio Divina* means holy reading, and this form of prayer was used in the early centuries of the Church. Teach the young people this prayer form by first explaining the steps of the prayer. The main steps of *Lectio Divina* are as follows:

- ✧ Quiet the environment, the body and the mind.
- ✧ Read the selected Scripture passage slowly. (Use a passage from today's Gospel reading.)
- ✧ Pause for reflection, and read the passage again.
- ✧ Pause for reflection and read the passage a third time.
- ✧ Initiate discussion in small groups. Ask the students to discuss the words that drew their attention, how they connected with various aspects of the reading, and how they are called to act on what they learn about the reading.

Remembering Jesus' Entry to Jerusalem

When Jesus entered Jerusalem it was to the joyful shouts of those who loved him, trusted him and believed in his teachings and his word. These people were some of the earliest believers in Christ. Choose specific actions this week that echo Christ's teachings, and offer them to God this Holy Week as you remember Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem.

Closing Prayer

*Lord Jesus Christ,
we have begun to follow you on the journey
that will lead us to the heart of your
saving mysteries.
During these holy days,
may we come to know you better than ever before,
as our brother and friend, our teacher and our
master, our Lord and Savior.
You live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.