



SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 2016

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD Riding into the unknown

In his painting *Entry into Jerusalem*, Italian Renaissance painter Giotto captures all the excitement and unexpected occurrences of that famous ride, including fainting women and people climbing trees to get a better view of the spectacle. Have you ever made a decision to go somewhere and been unsure where the decision would lead? On this Palm Sunday, consider Jesus' determination to embrace his destiny and the pain and glory that it would bring. Gaining such strength and steadfastness is each Christian's goal.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Procession: Luke 19:28-40 (37); Mass: Isaiah 50:4-7; Philippians 2:6-11; Luke 22:14—23:56 (38).* "Jesus proceeded on his journey up to Jerusalem."

MONDAY, MARCH 21 MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

A time for extravagance

A well-known passage from Ecclesiastes assures us human history is composed of balanced elements that can't be denied. There's a time for birth and also for death, for war and for peace. If Lent is a season of self-denial, Holy Week seems to launch us into the zone of extravagance. Mary of Bethany pours out a year's wages on the feet of Jesus with her expensive oil. After 40 days reflecting on almsgiving, we may wonder at this use of resources. The right thing to do is not always the obvious thing.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 42:1-7; John 12:1-11 (257).* "Mary took a liter of costly perfumed oil . . . and anointed the feet of Jesus."

TUESDAY, MARCH 22 TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Let love have the final word

"The more I meet people, the more convinced I am that we must only work on ourselves, to grow in grace. The only thing we can do about people is to love them," Dorothy Day once wrote to a friend. Lent is an open invitation to take a long, loving look at the gifts and challenges of our everyday lives and to discover grace therein. This week, as Easter approaches, we are invited to see how God sees—to see our shortcomings and to recognize our true motivations and to still choose love. When all is said and done in your life, what will be the final word? Why not make it love?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 49:1-6; John 13:21-33, 36-38 (258).* "I am made glorious in the sight of the Lord, and my God is now my strength."

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23 WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK Change the world with love

The Wednesday of Holy Week is sometimes called "Spy Wednesday," an allusion to Judas' betrayal of Jesus. This betrayal would be followed by other disloyalties toward Jesus by the disciples. As painful as the story is, in the end love has the final word—a word so powerful as to transform the world. How might we turn anew to this word when insecurity, anger, or fear may tempt us to be less compassionate and caring toward others? During Holy Week and throughout the year, how can we embrace love and help transform the world?

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 50:4-9a; Matthew 26:14-25 (259).* "Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply, 'Surely it is not I, Rabbi?' He answered, 'You have said so.'"

THURSDAY, MARCH 24

EVENING MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (HOLY THURSDAY) We've got a mandate

You may have heard of Holy Thursday being referred to as Maundy Thursday. Maundy refers to the act of foot washing, and the word is taken from the Latin *mandatum*, or "command." Recall that as he washed their feet on Holy Thursday, Jesus gave his followers "a new commandment," enjoining them, and all of us, to "serve one another" just as he had served in the humblest of ways. There are many ways to be of service and today is a great day to start. Roll up your sleeves and get your hands wet!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-15 (39).* "Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.'"

FRIDAY, MARCH 25

FRIDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION (GOOD FRIDAY); DAY OF FAST AND ABSTINENCE Were you there?

Poet Emily Dickinson ponders the sufferings of Christ in bursts of words and quirky dashes that suggest her overwhelming awe and empathy: *To know just how He suffered—would be dear / To know if any Human eyes were near / To whom He could entrust His wavering gaze / Until it settle broad—on Paradise.* Dickinson tries to put herself in the scene of Jesus' crucifixion to understand how she would feel and how her reactions would compare to those of Jesus. Meditate on the Passion narrative, and consider where you will want your gaze to be at the hour of your death.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 52:13—53:12; Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1—19:42 (40).* "[H]e said, 'It is finished.' And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit."

SATURDAY, MARCH 26 HOLY SATURDAY Don't miss it

"This is the night"—the Easter Vigil begins with these words. This is the night when we hear the story of our faith, the elect enter the waters of Baptism, and the catechumens are confirmed in the Spirit. It is the best "over-the-top" liturgy of the church year when all the stops are pulled out and we hear in the Eucharistic Prayer: "Remember those who have been baptized and confirmed today as members of your family. Help them to follow Christ your Son with loving hearts." Celebrate the Easter Vigil with your community of faith in person or in spirit, and ask for the grace of a more loving heart.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Vigil: Genesis 1:1—2:2; Genesis 22:1-18; Exodus 14:15—15:1; Exodus 15:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 17-18; 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; Mark 16:1-7 (41).* "We shall also be united with him in the Resurrection."



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

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