



Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, and the people were so happy to see Him! They waved palm branches, laid down their coats on the road and cheered, welcoming him into the city.

Can you think of a person—a parent, grandparent, or teacher- who helps you welcome Jesus into your heart with joy, like the crowd welcomed Him into Jerusalem?

Draw or write about a time when someone has helped you welcome Jesus into your life.



Father, thank You for this story that shows how people celebrated Jesus with joy. Help me to welcome Him into my life every day with a happy heart.

Action: this week I will try to show love by...

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LECTIO DIVINA

Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Year A - Palm Sunday

A resource for personal, family and community prayer.



Gospel: Matthew 21:1-11

You are invited to read the Gospel passage attentively, respectfully and reverently as a gift of God.

When they were near Jerusalem and had come in sight of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village facing you, and you will immediately find a tethered donkey and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them here to me. If anyone says anything to you, you are to say, 'The Master needs them and will send them back directly.'

This took place to fulfil the prophecy: "Say to the daughter of Zion: Look your King comes to you; he is humble and rides on a donkey and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden."

So the disciples set out and did what Jesus told them. They brought the donkey and the colt, then they laid their cloaks on their backs and he sat on them. Great crowds of people spread their cloaks on the road, while others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in his path. The crowds who went in front of him and those who followed were all shouting, "Hosanna to the son of David! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heavens!" And when he entered Jerusalem the whole

city was in turmoil. "Who is this?" people asked. And the crowds answered, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

Background to Gospel passage

Where does it happen? It takes place in Bethphage near Jerusalem, a small village at the top of the Mount of Olives.

When does it happen? It takes place as Jesus is about to enter into Jerusalem at the beginning of the last week of his earthly life.

Who is there? Jesus, his disciples and crowds of people which would have included pilgrims who were there for the celebration Passover.

What happens? The entry into Jerusalem was a significant event for the early Christian communities as all four Gospels record this story. Jerusalem was the central hub of religious, social and political life, hence pilgrims travelled there for the Feast of Passover, celebrating the liberation of the Jews from slavery in Egypt.

Jesus sends two of his disciples into Bethphage to pick up a tethered donkey and a colt from some friends that he knew he could depend on. Jesus deliberately chooses a donkey, a lowly animal, capable of carrying heavy burdens - symbolic of humility, endurance and non-violence.

lence which Jesus displays during the events of Holy Week. Jesus is convinced that these values will ultimately triumph: that goodness will conquer evil, light will conquer darkness,

and love ultimately conquers everything. When Jesus enters Jerusalem in this way the crowd recognize God's presence in him and respond with celebrations fit for a king.

Suggested Guidelines to help you recognise this passage in your life experience.

“Go to the village....”

Can you enter into the experience of Jesus by remembering a time when you just knew you could count on certain people to be there for you and to meet the need of the moment - people who were happy to help out and yet remain in the background?

“Look, your King comes to you; he is humble and rides on a donkey.”

Can you enter into the experience of Jesus by remembering an occasion when the time had come to confront your own “Jerusalem”: a place of opposition, hostility or conflict? You were determined to face the challenge with humility, gentleness and the power of truth - confident that these values would ultimately prevail.

“Great crowds of people spread their cloaks...cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in his path”.

Can you remember an experience of solidarity and fraternity which brought home to you the power and strength of the voice of the people to bring about change? You discovered that there was a real strength in togetherness.

“Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord”

Can you remember an occasion where you witnessed people who manifested great courage, humility and generosity in very difficult circumstances? In them you glimpsed the presence of God's love.

What does this Gospel remind me of? *Where was it? When was it? Who was there? What happened?*

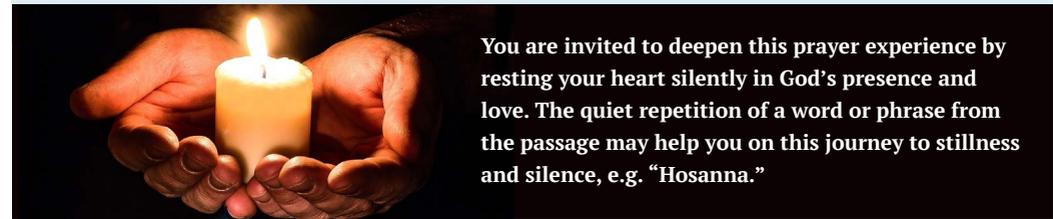
Now I can see that God's loving presence and action were in that life experience.

Prayer Response - you are invited to respond in prayer in your own words.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for the times when I have experienced this Gospel in my life...

Heavenly Father, I am sorry for the times I have fallen short of living this Gospel...

Heavenly Father, please help me to live this Gospel...



You are invited to deepen this prayer experience by resting your heart silently in God's presence and love. The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage may help you on this journey to stillness and silence, e.g. “Hosanna.”

An Invitation to Reflect

What new insight has the Gospel opened my eyes to see?

Action

This week I will try to live the Gospel by...

Thought for the week

The only way to transform the darkness of evil in this world is to endure with the light of humility, gentleness and truth.

Rest in this truth, hold it in prayer and trust that it will bear fruit in your life.