



# Bringing Home the Word

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion | April 9, 2017

## Come to Save Us

By Mary Katharine Deeley

**F**rom the joyful procession into Jerusalem, through the passion and death of Jesus, to the sealing of the tomb by the guards, Passion Sunday—as it is sometimes called—prepares us for the coming Holy Week.

The story draws us in. We are the ones who hail Jesus as the one who is to come. We pray the familiar words of Psalm 118 that call on God to save us. (The familiar word *Hosanna* is actually a plea for salvation from God.) When we hear the passion narrative, we become

the disciples at the Last Supper and are unable to stay awake in Gethsemane. We are the crowd who cries out for Barabbas (a play on words: the name means “Son of the Father”) and calls for Jesus’ crucifixion.

This is the most important thing that has ever happened to us. This is the story of the fulfillment of God’s promise to save us. We will meditate and pray on this mystery all week: God so loved the world, he sent us his only Son.

Paul reminds us that not only did Jesus not deem equality with God something to be grasped, he did not deem human beings creatures to be despised. He became one of us to lead us back into right relationship with God. On Good Friday, we will hear John’s version of the passion and remind ourselves again of the wonder that someone might give up his life for us. There was nothing we could do to earn God’s love, nor could we make God do this. †

## Sunday Readings

**Matthew 21:1–11 (Procession)**  
**Isaiah 50:4–7 (first reading)**

“Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest.”

**Philippians 2:6–11**

“He humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

**Matthew 26:14–27:66**

“We remember that this impostor while still alive said, ‘After three days I will be raised up.’”

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## A Word From Pope Francis

Jesus has awakened great hopes, especially in the hearts of the simple, the humble, the poor, the forgotten, those who do not matter in the eyes of the world. He understands human sufferings, he has shown the face of God’s mercy, and he has bent down to heal body and soul. This is Jesus. This is his heart which looks to all of us, to our sicknesses, to our sins. The love of Jesus is great.

*Homily,*  
Palm Sunday,  
St. Peter’s Square,  
March 24, 2013



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### ONE QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

- What will you do during this Holy Week to express your thankfulness for God’s love?
- How do you hail Jesus as the “one who is to come”?



# Our Ignorance of God's Love

By Ron Rolheiser, OMI

**“Forgive them** Father for they know not what they do!” Jesus said this

of his executioners. But is it true? A lot indicates that they were far from innocent. How could Jesus' executioners not know what they were doing?

The people who crucified Jesus didn't know what they were doing because they didn't know how much they were loved. That is the blindness and the real ignorance of the executioners. Far too often we crucify others and ourselves because of ignorance because we feel unloved. For this reason we are harsh in our judgments of others and unaware of

why we ourselves are prone to weakness and to compromise our dignity. We are judgmental and weak because we don't know any better.

The type of ignorance that allowed sincere people to crucify Jesus can also explain why so many good, sincere people today are massively blind, communally and individually, to the economic and social demands made by our faith. The real reason we can live so comfortably as the gap between the rich and the poor widens is because we don't know how much we are loved by God, not because we are bad and without conscience. We feel unloved and so we feel we have to take life for ourselves.

Small wonder we settle for second-best or for almost anything else that promises to fill an aching void inside us. Jesus, no doubt, is looking at us and saying: “Forgive them Father for they know not what they do!” Too few of us, at any personal level, have ever heard God say to us: “I love you!” Too few of us have ever felt what Jesus must have felt when, at his baptism, he heard his Father say: “You are my beloved child, in you I take delight!” Indeed, most of us have never heard another human being saying this to us, let alone God.

There is a place inside us, a place we are rarely aware of, where each of us is being touched and held unconditionally in love by God. Jesus' executioners acted in a darkness that came from never having had that experience. †

Source: *Daybreaks*, © 2004, Liguori Publications

## Radical, Imperfect Disciples Are We

By Julie Donovan Massey  
and Bridget Burke Ravizza

**J**esus' preaching teaches us two important lessons about discipleship we should recall during Lent. First, the call to follow Jesus is radical and risky. Second, Jesus calls imperfect people to be disciples.

In all four Gospels, we see that the call to follow Jesus is demanding, uncomfortable, and risky. Why? Because when Jesus calls disciples, he asks for total commitment. He invites them to

wholeheartedly let go of whatever is holding them back from following God.

What might be holding you back from authentic radical discipleship? Perhaps it is an inordinate concern for success at work. Perhaps it is too much time spent thinking about possessions. Or are you clinging to a grudge, refusing to let go of anger and offer forgiveness and seek reconciliation? Do you make judgments about others to make yourself feel safe and superior? Could you let go of self-righteousness to actively build a community in which everyone feels accepted?

Recognizing God's unconditional love shown in Jesus frees us to strive to do our best, knowing we need not prove our perfection to earn God's love.

We are challenged because we can no longer use our weaknesses as an excuse to do nothing or to give up. If each of us is called to be a disciple, we must seek holiness, knowing we are, already, radically loved by God. †

Source: *Liguorian*, © March 2011, Liguori Publications



Lord, you are the model of nonviolence and unconditional love. May your example inspire me to be a more loving and forgiving person in life.

*Mindful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

April 10–15

Monday

Holy Week:  
Is 42:1–7 / Jn 12:1–11

Tuesday

Holy Week:  
Is 49:1–6 / Jn 13:21–33, 36–38


Wednesday

Holy Week:  
Is 50:4–9a / Mt 26:14–25

Holy Thursday Ex 12:1–8, 11–14 /  
1 Cor 11:23–26 / Jn 13:1–15

Good Friday Is 52:13–53:12 / Heb 4:14–16;  
5:7–9 / Jn 18:1–19:42

Holy Saturday Easter Vigil: Gn 1:1–2:2 /  
Gn 22:1–18 / Ex 14:15–15:1 / Is 54:5–14 /  
Is 55:1–11 / Bar 3:9–15, 32–4:4 / Ez 36:16–17a,  
18–28 / Rom 6:3–11 / Mt 28:1–10

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