

Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Palm Sunday Year A

A resource for personal, family
and community prayer.



“Hosanna...”

Gospel: Matthew 21:1-11 Blessing of Palms.

¹When they were near Jerusalem and had come in sight of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying 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. ³If anyone says anything to you, you are to say, ‘The Master needs them and will send them back directly.’”

⁴This took place to fulfil the prophecy: ⁵“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.”

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



⁶So the disciples set out and did what Jesus told them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt, then they laid their cloaks on their backs and he sat on them. ⁸Great crowds of people spread their cloaks on the road, while others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in his path.

⁹The 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! Ho-

sanna in the highest heavens!” ¹⁰And when he entered Jerusalem the whole city was in turmoil. “Who is this?” people asked. ¹¹And the crowds answered, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Reading

The entry into Jerusalem was a significant event for the early Christian communities as all four evangelists record this story.

Jerusalem was the central hub of religious and political life, and pilgrims were travelling there from all over the country to celebrate the Feast of Passover. This was a feast celebrating the liberation of the Jews from slavery in Egypt.

Knowing that he has friends he can count on, Jesus sends his disciples into Bethphage to pick up a tethered donkey and a colt. Jesus deliberately chooses the donkey, a lowly animal, dependable and able to carry heavy burdens -symbolic of humility and gentleness. By contrast, the horse is physically powerful and is symbolic of force, warfare and Roman oppression.

When Jesus enters Jerusalem the crowd recognize God’s presence in him and respond with celebrations fit for a king. Jesus is convinced that his values will ultimately triumph: that goodness will conquer evil, light will conquer darkness, and love ultimately conquers everything.



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.

Recognising

You are invited to meditate on the passage, or any part of it, by letting it speak to your life experience until you feel to say “I recognise this passage.”

v2. “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?

v5. “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 and gentleness and the power of truth- confident that these values would ultimately prevail.

v8. “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.

v9. “Blessings on him who come 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.

Responding

Having recognised God’s presence in life, you are invited to **respond** in your own words, in prayer (thanksgiving, repentance and petition).

I thank you, Father, for the courageous men and women who come “humble and riding on a donkey” – giving of themselves generously in the care of others.

Thank you for their inner strength, compassion and competence as they witness to the human spirit of self-sacrifice, goodness, and love -“Hosanna! Blessings on these men and women who come in your name”.

Father, I ask forgiveness for the times that I have resorted to spitefulness, anger and violence to resolve my conflicts and, in doing so, have done more harm than good. Lord, help me to follow the way of your son Jesus - to meet evil with goodness, darkness with light and hatred with love, so that others might say, “Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord”

Resting

You are invited to enter deep prayer by simply **resting** your heart in God’s presence (Contemplative moment). The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage might help you on this journey into greater silence and stillness, e.g. “**Hosanna**”.

Reflecting

From your journey with this passage, you are now invited to **reflect**, and put into your own words, any new insights or understanding that you have received (Wisdom moment).

From your journey with this passage, what new insight has been given to you into the meaning of humility, gentleness, courage and inner strength? **Courage is facing the darkness with the light of love.**



Children

Reading

Jesus sends two of his disciples to get a donkey and a colt so that he can enter Jerusalem in a simple way. The crowds of people are filled with joy as they recognise the importance of this God moment, and greet Jesus with a warm welcome as he enters the city. The people lay their cloaks and branches on the path in thanksgiving for the presence of God in the prophet Jesus from Nazareth.

Recognising

Can you remember a time when you were welcomed warmly by people who were filled with joy to see you, perhaps by your grandparents, returning to school after being sick, at your sports club or a friend's birthday party?

Can you remember meeting a blessed 'Jesus person' who brought the best out in you, filled you with joy and helped you to see how wonderful you are, which led you to give thanks to God?

Responding

Father, I thank You for the 'Jesus people' in my life, especially my family and friends, who welcome me warmly and fill me with joy.

Father, I am sorry for the times that I could not recognise Your presence in the people that I met and when I missed the opportunity to welcome them with love and to bring joy to their lives.

Father, I ask that that I may be filled with a joy that inspires me to offer a warm welcome to each person that I meet.

Resting

Rest in the joyful presence of the Father by repeating "BLESSINGS ON HIM" for as long as it is possible. May you be filled with joy as you are drawn deeper into the warmth of the Father's presence.

Reflecting

Offering a warm welcome full of joy is made possible by seeing the true value of another person.

Lenten Lectio Series - Lectio Booklet-Journeying with the Gospels of Lent- Year A (Now available). Meditate on the Way- Living the Word Podcast accompanies the series (Available on all podcast platforms). Further resources: lectio.newrydominican.com

A simple summary of Lectio steps can be found in the porch of the church.