

Brothers and Sisters,

Today, on this Sunday of the Passion, Palm Sunday, we enter into the celebration of the Great and Holy Week, wherein the mystery of our salvation was accomplished. We walk with Jesus along the processional way from the Mount of Olives to the Holy City of Jerusalem where he enters in triumph and is hailed as King of the Jews. But only a few days from now, on Spy Wednesday, he will be betrayed by one of his own disciples and handed over to the Jews and Romans. Soon, the very same people who welcomed him as their Messiah will cry out for his crucifixion, and we, along with all of humanity, are included in that number.

This week, we will also recline with Jesus and his disciples on Holy Thursday at the Last Supper, and ponder the mystery of humility and service, the mystery of the priesthood and the institution of the Holy Eucharist. On Good Friday we will walk with Jesus along the Via Dolorosa, the Way of Sorrows, the Way of the Cross, and stand with his Blessed Mother and St. John beneath the instrument of his crucifixion, as the sacrifice for our salvation is made complete. We will walk with his Mother, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus to the darkness of the tomb into which his lifeless body is placed. And we will wait, and watch, and hope, and pray during that holy night until the light of the new day dawns and the glory of the Resurrection is revealed.

This entire week, and especially the Three Days of the Sacred Triduum, are a unified movement and a singular moment in time, the center of the Church Year and the center of all time - past, present, and future. We do not merely remember or observe these happenings as if from a distance, but through the sacred liturgies and ritual of the Church we truly participate in these holy events, we are actually there, as if in a time out of time, as we enter into and experience the paschal mystery of our Lord.

Let us be faithful this Holy Week, so that when the Lord asks us, as he did his first disciples, "could you not watch with me one hour?" (Matt. 26:40) we can reply with confidence, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life (John 6:68). And then, with an integrity born from this faithfulness, arrive at Easter morning to truly share in the triumph of Christ and his resurrection.

The Rev. Richard Ballard
Parochial Vicar