

CELEBRATE SABBATH

Palm Sunday

God's covenant love is absolutely reliable because His Love is steadfast.

(Psalm 85)

On Palm Sunday, we remember Jesus entering Jerusalem to face rejection and eventual death. He moved, with courage, into hostile territory. He entered a city which killed its prophets and did not know how to receive the things that are for its own good, a city that did not know how to receive blessings and gifts and grace.....

They greeted him as they would greet a pilgrim: "Blessed is he who enters in the name of the Lord" (Ps. 118:26). And they shouted "Hosanna!". "Hosanna" means "Save now". It was a cry for help, which a people in distress addressed to their king or their god. "Save us, we beseech thee, O Lord" (Ps.118:25). Hosanna in the highest means, let even the angels in the highest of heavens cry unto God, "save now". It is essentially an oppressed people's cry to their savior and king for deliverance. These hosannas of Palm Sunday will become the cries of "crucify him, crucify him!"

Pray for courage and wisdom to face difficult situations. Pray for those who have to live in hostile situation.

Isaiah 50:4-7

The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, that I may know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them.

Reflect on developing a "well-trained tongue" and "well-disciplined" life.

Reflect on speaking words of affirmation, compassion, encouragement, kindness and support.

Psalms 22

**I will proclaim your name to my brethren;
In the midst of the assembly, I will praise you.
You who fear the Lord praise him;
All you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him;
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel.**

Philippians 2:6-11

Paul says, Jesus humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even on a cross. **Be humble in your ways. Surrender to God's plans, even at great cost.**

Mathew 26:14 – 27:66

We remember Jesus being betrayed, tried, judged, condemned and crucified. We remember him dying on a cross. We remember Jesus giving himself totally in life and in death. We remember the cross, sign of shame and punishment, becoming the symbol of sacrifice, healing, unconditional love, total giving, redemption and salvation. We remember and relive the passion, the cross and the death of Jesus.

Reflect on how you share in the passion and cross of Jesus. Remember those who have heavy burden to carry.

Remember the innocent, especially children and the helpless who have to suffer without support.

REFLECT AND PRAY:

What do you need to do in order to develop a "well-disciplined" life?

What do you need to do to move into and face difficult situations?

Pray for those who must live in hostile situations.

What does it mean to you to cry out "Hosanna" - Lord, "save now"?

"Behold your King comes", "Hosanna" to the "Son of David" - a King like David, King of "Truth, Justice, Integrity and Peace". What does it mean to cry out to the king of "Truth, Justice, Peace and Integrity"?

What does the "passion" of Jesus mean to you? How do you share in that Passion?

Saint of the Day, April 2 - St. Francis of Paola and 23 other saints are remembered this day.

Francis was born in the town of Paola, Italy and educated by the Franciscan friars. At the age of 13, he entered a friary of the Franciscan Order to fulfill the vow made by his parents. At the completion of the year he went with his parents on a pilgrimage to Assisi, Rome, and other places of devotion. Returning to Paola, he selected a secluded cave on his father's estate and lived in solitude; but later on, he found an even-more

secluded cave on the sea coast. Here he remained alone for about six years, giving himself to prayer and mortification.

Before he was 20, he received the first followers who had come to imitate his way of life. Seventeen years later, when his disciples had grown in number, Francis established a Rule for his austere community and sought Church approval. This was the founding of the Hermits of St. Francis of Assisi, who were approved by the Holy See in 1474.

In 1492, Francis changed the name of his community to “Minims” because he wanted them to be known as the least (minimi) in the household of God. Humility was to be the hallmark of the brothers as it had been in Francis’s personal life. Besides the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, Francis enjoined upon his followers the fourth obligation of a perpetual Lenten fast. He felt that heroic mortification was necessary as a means for spiritual growth.

It was Francis’s desire to be a contemplative hermit, yet he believed that God was calling him to the apostolic life. He began to use the gifts he had received, such as the gifts of miracles and prophecy, to minister to the people of God. A defender of the poor and oppressed, Francis incurred the wrath of King Ferdinand of Naples for the admonitions he directed toward the king and his sons.

Following the request of Pope Sixtus IV, Francis traveled to Paris to help Louis XI of France prepare for his death. While ministering to the king, Francis was able to influence the course of national politics. He helped to restore peace between France and Brittany by advising a marriage between the ruling families, and between France and Spain by persuading Louis XI to return some disputed land.

Francis was now eager to return to Italy, but the king would not permit him, not wishing to lose his counsels and direction. Francis spent the last three months of his life in entire solitude, preparing for death. On Holy Thursday of 1507 he gathered his community around him and exhorted them specially to have mutual charity amongst themselves and to maintain the rigor of their life and in particular perpetual abstinence. The next day, Good Friday, he again called them together and gave them his last instructions and appointed a Vicar General. He then received the last rites and asked to have the Passion according to St. John read out to him, and whilst this was being read, he died on April 2, 1507, almost a week after his 91st birthday.

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