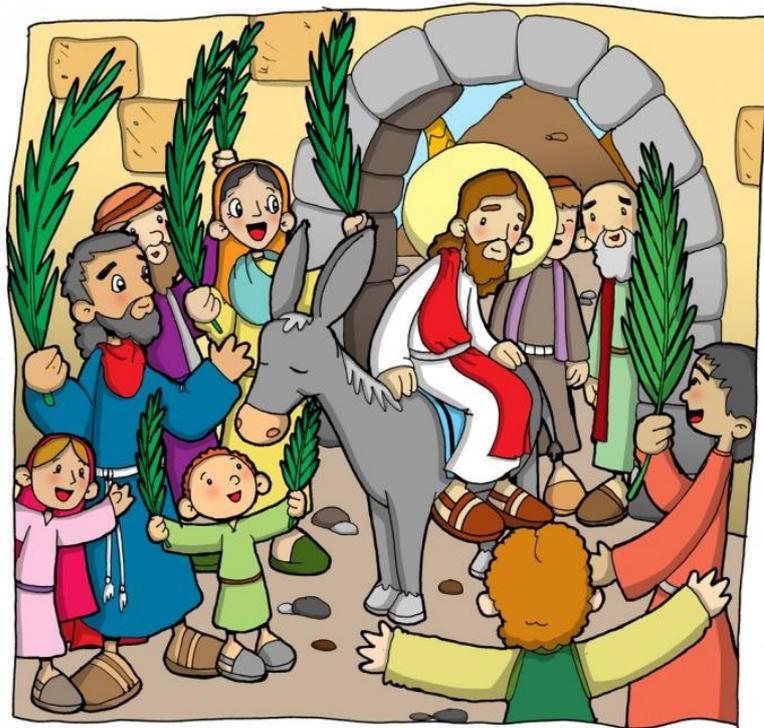


## Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion



The death of Jesus on the cross is the consequence  
of a life of radical service to justice and love;  
it is the result of his preferential option  
for the poor and the dispossessed;  
of his preferential option for his people,  
who suffered exploitation and extortion.  
In this world, every path forward in favor of justice  
and love means risking one's life.

(E. Schillebeeckx)

**- Reading I Isaiah 50:4-7**

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

Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back.

I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting.

The Lord GOD is my help, therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

**Responsorial Psalm Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24**

**R. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?**

All who see me scoff at me;

they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:

“He relied on the LORD; let him deliver him,  
let him rescue him, if he loves him.” **R**

Indeed, many dogs surround me, a pack of evildoers closes in upon me;  
They have pierced my hands and my feet; I can count all my bones. **R**

They divide my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots.  
But you, O LORD, be not far from me; O my help, hasten to aid me. **R**

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!” **R**

**Reading II Philippians 2:6-11**

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God,

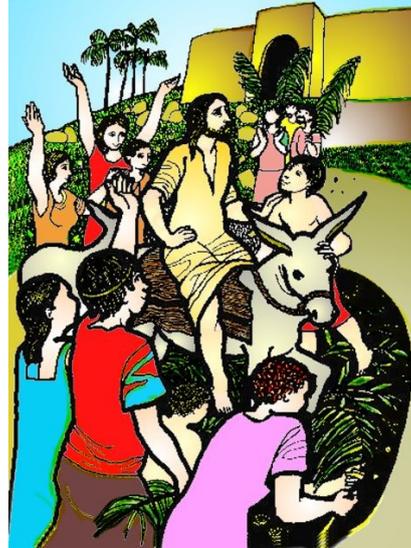
did not regard equality with God something to be grasped.

Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Because which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

## Matthew 21:1-11

When Jesus and the disciples drew near Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tethered, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them here to me.



And if anyone should say anything to you, reply, 'The master has need of them.' Then he will send them at once."

This happened so that what had been spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled:

*Say to daughter Zion,  
"Behold, your king comes to you,  
meek and riding on an ass,  
and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden."*

The disciples went and did as Jesus had ordered them. They brought the ass and the colt and laid their cloaks over them,

## TO FOLLOW JESUS LEADS TO THE CROSS

We are so familiar with the cross of Calvary that it no longer causes much impression. Custom domesticates it and «diminishes it» completely. That's why it's good to remember some aspects all too forgotten about the Crucified One.

Let's begin by saying that Jesus didn't die a natural death. His death hadn't been the expected extinction of his biological life. They have killed Jesus violently. He hasn't died either as a victim of a casual or unfortunate accident, but rather condemned after a process carried out by the religious and civil forces most influential in that society.

His death has been the consequence of the reaction he provoked by his free, fraternal and solidary action with the most poor and abandoned of that society.

This means to say that you can't live out the Gospel without consequences. You can't construct God's reign, which is a reign of fraternity, liberty and justice, without provoking rejection and persecution by those who aren't interested in any change whatsoever. Solidarity with the defenseless is impossible without suffering the reaction of the powerful.

His commitment to create a more just and human society was so concrete and serious that his whole life was committed. And yet Jesus wasn't a revolutionary, or a political leader, or a religious fanatic. He was a man in whom was incarnate and was made reality the unfathomable love of God for human beings.

That's why we now know what are the forces that feel threatened when true love penetrates into a society, and how they react violently trying to overcome and smother the actions of those who seek a more just and free fraternity.

The Gospel will always be persecuted by those who put safety and order above fraternity and justice (Pharisaism). God's reign will always be seen blocked by all political power that understands itself as absolute power (Pilate). The message of love will be rejected at its roots by every religion in which God isn't Father of those who suffer (Jewish High Priests).

To follow Jesus always leads to the cross; it implies being ready to suffer conflict, polemics, persecution and even death. But his resurrection reveals to us that for a crucified life, lived out until the end with Jesus' spirit, there only awaits the resurrection.

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**Translator: Fr. Jay VonHandorf**