

We made it to Palm Sunday and the beginning of Holy Week as we once again walk the journey with Jesus from his entrance into Jerusalem on a donkey to his crucifixion outside the walls of the city on a cross at Golgotha...until we reach the empty tomb. And today we pause and reflect on the events of Palm Sunday – and remember the donkey – the symbol of humility that Jesus chose to ride into the city on...not on a horse but on a young donkey. It was surprising then and its surprising now- because nobody wants to be a donkey –because they're thought of as being stubborn and stupid. We say, "Don't be a donkey." Well, we use a different word for it, but we say, "Hey, don't be a donkey. Nobody wants to be a donkey." But Jesus chose the donkey...and I mentioned a few years ago to the children on Palm Sunday – I think God likes donkeys because they're humble creatures who work really, really hard –and who needs horse power when you can have donkey power?

Holy Week, of course, is part of our following the events of Jesus' life, starting in Advent as we awaited Jesus' birth at Christmas and then through Epiphany and ordinary time as we revisited the stories of Jesus' ministry and life in the Gospels – we heard again the stories of Jesus healing the lepers, calling Zaccheus - the hated tax collector to come and eat with him, we heard the stories of Jesus' healings, his call to the rich man to sell all that he had and give it to the poor, we heard about the feeding of the 5,000 again and the criticisms of Jesus for eating with prostitutes and the unclean, we heard of Jesus having compassion on the woman caught in adultery and we heard Jesus tell the story of the Good Samaritan, we heard Jesus telling those in power that they were corrupt, we heard him spar verbally with the religious leaders and scribes, we heard again about Jesus clearing the temple because the money changers were defrauding people, we heard again about Jesus casting out demons and foretelling his own death and reminding us this Lent that God so loved the world that he gave his Only Son. We heard all the stories and now find ourselves once again recalling the last days of Jesus' earthly life as he entered Jerusalem on the donkey.

And so we're invited to step into a place of humility with Jesus and the donkey today on this Palm Sunday. And I'm going to invite all of us to set aside

our current context and issues and views and just try and see Jesus, Jesus ministry, and the events of Holy Week with new and fresh eyes. Because we are all, admittedly, so entrenched right now, me included, in our political and ideological world views that it can obscure our ability to really see Jesus and hear his message without also hearing the narratives all around us. So we just name that.

But right now- and you might want to close or eyes o just focus inwardly for a moment – I invite you to set aside some things about our current context...all the noise and competing voices. Set aside what the news says. Set aside what the politicians say. Set aside what you read on social media. Set aside your opinions about how a public health crisis should or shouldn't be handled. Set aside your opinions about people on the Right and people on the Left. Set aside the agendas competing and clamoring for your attention. Set aside the issues that we all know constantly divide us as people. Just for a few minutes- pretend for a moment they don't exist. We can all pick it back up later but today, now, just for the moment – we can open our hearts and minds as if none of that was cemented into our psyches. With no ax to grind....we're all just people searching for God's truth...together. And we can ponder a few questions knowing what we know about Jesus just from the Scriptural witness and what he might say to us today...and we can listen for Jesus' voice and let the other voices fade for now.

What would Jesus say about St. James? About La Jolla? About San Diego? About America?

What would Jesus say about women?

What would Jesus say about men?

What would Jesus say about people of color? About Asian Americans? Native Americans? About Mexicans and people from Central and Latin America? About our black brothers and sisters? About our white sisters and brothers?

What would Jesus say about housing, low-income families, and the homeless?

What would Jesus say about our children?

What would Jesus say about taxes? About corporations?

Why did the crowds yell "crucify him" on Good Friday?

What would Jesus say about what's happening on our southern border?

What would people be yelling today?

What would Jesus say about what's happening on our northern border?

What was Jesus' purpose?

And what would Jesus say is your purpose?

What would Jesus say about immigrants? Refugees?

Listen for his voice. And let's follow him to the foot cross this week with open and humble ears.

What would Jesus say about our Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim neighbors?

Amen.

What would Jesus say about the Church and Christians today?

Who did Jesus hang out with and who would he hang out with today?

Who did Jesus eat with? Who would he eat with now? Where would you find him?

Who did Jesus preach to and who listened to him....and who would listen today?

What would Jesus say about people who are sick and what we could do about it?

What would Jesus say about people who are hungry and what we could do about that?

What would Jesus say about the way we fight and talk about one another in this country – especially those on opposite sides of our viewpoints?

Who did Jesus have mercy on? Who would he have mercy on today?

Who did Jesus have harsh words for? Who might he have harsh words for today?

How and why did Jesus' shows of mercy and his hard sayings get him into trouble? What would get him into trouble now?

Why did the crowds cheer for him on Palm Sunday?