

Fr. Francis Maple

I wish you a happy holy week.

HOLY WEEK

THE MOST IMPORTANT WEEK IN OUR LORD'S LIFE

This is the most important week in Our Lord's life when He gave Himself to us in the Holy Eucharist and died for us so that we could live with Him forever in heaven. What part are you and I going to play in this week? Are we going to try and be as close to Jesus every moment of this week or is this week going to be just another ordinary week and the next time Jesus sees us in church will be next Sunday? On behalf of Jesus I am appealing to you to make this a HOLY week and not just an ordinary week?

Today we celebrate Palm Sunday when Jesus rode triumphantly as the Messiah into Jerusalem upon a donkey. I don't think Jesus ever rode upon a donkey. It was His custom to travel the length and breadth of Palestine on foot. Today, Palm Sunday, He showed unmistakably that He was the Messiah. He told His apostles to go to a village and there they would find an ass tied, on which no man had yet sat. They were to loosen it and bring it to Him. Jesus was doing this because the prophet Zechariah had written, "Rejoice, daughter of Zion! Shout with gladness, daughter of Jerusalem! See now, your king comes to you: he is victorious, he is triumphant, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." (9.9) So when Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey He was symbolically indicating to the people He was the Messiah.

Spontaneously His disciples placed their garments on the donkey's back. Some even spread their cloaks on the road to show their reverence. Others cut down branches from trees to wave them in the air to express their joy and at the top of their voices they cried, "Hosanna! Blessings on the King of Israel." Hosanna in the Aramaic language means 'Save us!' They welcomed Him as a king, national liberator, but Jesus is not a political liberator. If He was He would be riding a horse, an animal of war, not a donkey, an animal of peace, docility and humility.

Today, we are amongst the crowd laying palms on the road and cheering Him with shouts of "Hosanna!"

But TOMORROW we witness Mary Magdalene anointing Him with ointment in preparation for this burial. We hear Jesus warning His friends, "You will not always have Me with you."

On TUESDAY Jesus acknowledges that two of His friends, Judas and Peter, the first will betray Him and the second will deny knowing Him.

On WEDNESDAY, which is called SPY WEDNESDAY, Judas negotiates with the Chief Priests a price for betraying Jesus.

On HOLY THURSDAY we are with Jesus at the Last Supper when He ordains His first priests and gives us the Blessed Sacrament as His parting gift. From the Last Supper we watch Him make His way to the Garden of Gethsemane and going through that mental torment of what He was to suffer the next day. He was afraid and prayed in anguish to His Father, 'Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, let Your will be done, not Mine.'

On GOOD FRIDAY we witness Him unjustly condemned to death. We join His mother Mary as He begins that painful journey to Calvary. We see Him stripped, nailed to His cross between two thieves. There He hung for three hours before He died. There He proved how much He loved us. "Greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friend."