

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Palm Sunday begins in joy, but the joy is fragile ... and before we are finished, today, we will have been led to the foot of the Cross and made to stare at the Son of God, gasping out his life. Is this an image we want to hold before our children? Or do we try to shield them from it, or soft-pedal it in favor of the more cheery aspects of the Gospel: Jesus as teacher, healer and friend?

I remember my children talking about Jesus's prayer in Gethsemane. One of them said, "It helps me, when I'm scared, to know that Jesus could be scared too." Many of us have felt the same way. And yet, when you think of it, it hardly makes sense: how is our anguish made any more bearable by the knowledge that someone else has felt the same way? Logically, that is no help at all: it in no way removes whatever evil is causing our pain, and it offers the unpromising news that even the One who is closest to God has horrors to endure that are as bad as anything that has ever come the way of any human. What have we to look forward to in trying to love and serve God, when the life of the Messiah himself comes to this point of total abandonment?

Mercifully, logic is not the whole story. Humans in pain persist in being consoled by the knowledge that someone else whom they love and trust has "been there," knows what it feels like, and has emerged on the other side, still in one piece and ready to hold out a loving hand in the darkness. God has not built his universe on logic alone, but on emotional truth: on love, risk, freedom and hope. Having made us free to turn from him and hurt each other, he then comes to us in the only way he can—to allow us to hurt him, and to "be there" for us in whatever this crazy world may do to us, whatever we may do to ourselves, whatever we may do to each other. It may not make sense, but it is true to human nature, and children know this. The Cross is frightening, but it would be much more frightening to live in a world where God did not know what it feels like to be terribly hurt. And we know that Jesus did emerge in the other side, truly "in one piece"—and ready to hold out his hands to us for ever and ever. "Hosanna, Son of Man! Hosanna!"

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Year B
PALM
SUNDAY



"Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

MARK 11: 9-10



THIS IS PALM SUNDAY.

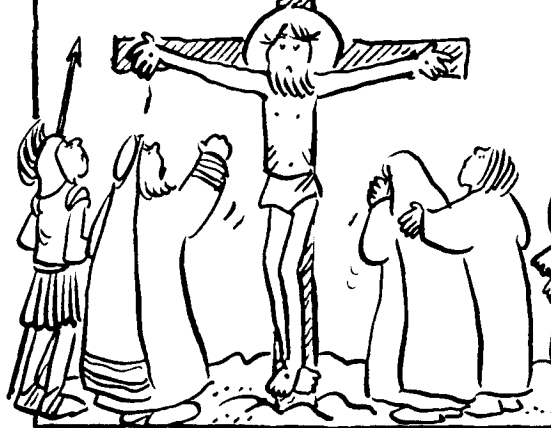
Jesus came to Jerusalem. People waved palms and shouted, "Hosanna!"



On Thursday of that week, Jesus shared bread and wine with his friends. But Jesus had enemies, too.



That night, his enemies found him and took him to jail. On Friday, he was killed on a cross.



Jesus's friends took his body down, and buried it in a cave tomb.



Palm Sunday is the first day of HOLY WEEK. This week, we remember how Jesus gave up his life for us. On MAUNDY THURSDAY, we remember his Last Supper with his friends. On GOOD FRIDAY we remember how he died on the cross. We call it "good," because Jesus died to bring us new life.

At the end of Holy Week, it is EASTER! Put the month and days on the calendar, and decorate it.

HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
MAUNDY THURSDAY	GOOD FRIDAY	HOLY SATURDAY	EASTER SUNDAY