

PALM SUNDAY • Remembering the Acts of Communion

On that first Palm Sunday, as the crowds cheered him on, Jesus knew.

He knew that the roar of *“Hosanna! Save us!”* would, just a few days later, turn to the roar of *“Crucify him!”*

He knew as he rode upon the donkey into the holy city of Jerusalem, that by Friday he would hang upon the cross.

He knew that as he lifted up his eyes to the Temple on the hill above, that his body would soon be laid low on the floor of a borrowed tomb.

Jesus knew.

But those following him, those walking alongside him, those who had heard him teach and had seen him heal and had experienced his power, they did *not* know.

And so, on that night when they gathered in a room in Jerusalem to share the Passover meal, how strange it must have seemed to watch Jesus hold up bread and to hear Jesus say these words: *“This is my body, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”*

“In remembrance?” they must have wondered. “Why do we need to ‘remember’ you, when you are right here with us?”

Then, after the meal, he lifted up a cup of wine, and said something equally confusing: *“This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me.”*

They did not know why Jesus said these perplexing things.

But Jesus knew.

After Jesus was taken from them, after he endured a mockery of trial, after he was beaten, after he was crucified, after his body was laid in a tomb, the stone was rolled in front of the opening, closing his body in the dark.

All this, Jesus knew was coming, as the crowds had proclaimed, “Hosanna! Save us!”

Jesus knew.

Jesus knew that the crowds did not understand what they were asking as they cried out to be saved.

He knew that the crowds did not know what it would mean, what he would have to do, have to endure, in order to save them.

But Jesus knew.
And Jesus was willing.
Because the crowd had cried out “Hosanna!”
Because we cry out, “Save us!”

Jesus took bread and wine, simple elements of a traditional meal, and transformed them into a means of grace and forgiveness and connection.

Jesus took the cross, an implement of cruelty and destruction, and transformed it into an instrument of restoration and hope.

Jesus took the tomb, a symbol of despair and finality, and transformed it into a new beginning.

Jesus takes the ordinary moments of our lives and transforms them into something extraordinary.

Jesus takes the challenging circumstances in which we find ourselves — the struggles, the pain, the uncertainty, the loneliness, the grief — and transforms them into something redemptive and healing.

Jesus meets us here today, in our homes, scattered throughout the community, throughout the country, throughout the world. Jesus meets us wherever we find ourselves this day. We are not alone, because Jesus is with us. We are not alone, because Jesus has knit us into a family of faith.

Although we cannot today physically share bread and juice, although we cannot see each other’s faces or hold each other’s hands, still we gather throughout this world, brothers and sisters in Christ, bound together in the love of Jesus, who gave so fully of himself, his body broken and his blood poured for us, so that we might be free. Free to care, free to heal, free to love and forgive and share.

Because the body of Christ was given for you, whenever we lift our voices together, we remember. We know.

Because the blood of Christ was given for you, whenever we lift our hearts in prayer, in lament, in praise, in supplication, in hope, we remember. We know.

Because the crowd cried out “Hosanna!”
Because we cry out, “Save us!”
Because Jesus knew.
Because Jesus was willing.

Thanks be to God.
Amen!

PALM SUNDAY 2020 • *Remembering the Acts of Communion*
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