



Lent

Week 5 – Palm Sunday

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity to gather here tonight in your holy Name.
We ask your blessing upon our Emmaus Group and upon the time we will spend together.
Draw us closer to You through each other. Give us the ability to search our own
hearts and know ourselves ever more, so we might better know You.*

Read Matthew 21:1-11 out loud together.

Discuss: Knowing the timeline of this story, capture the feelings of Christ, the apostles, and the crowd during this reading.

Discuss: What is your response to this reading - Emotionally? Intellectually?

As the rabbi from Nazareth entered Jerusalem on a donkey, no one could have missed the reference to a passage in the book of the prophet Zechariah: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zech. 9:9).”

Bishop Robert Barron

Discuss: What is the importance of Scripture to the Jewish community at the time? How does their knowledge of Scripture inform what they think about Jesus? How does YOUR knowledge of Scripture inform what you think about Jesus?

Discuss: Reflect back upon Lent. What has the Lenten journey been like for you? How have you grown closer to God and struggled? What have you learned?

Take a minute to silently read the following reflection about Christ’s Passion from Pope Francis, then read it out loud. Discuss the importance of Scripture to the Jewish community at the time. How does their knowledge of Scripture inform what they think about Jesus? How does YOUR knowledge of Scripture inform what you think about Jesus?



Reflection:

“This week begins with the festive procession with olive branches: the entire populace welcomes Jesus. The children and young people sing, praising Jesus.

But this week continues in the mystery of Jesus’ death and his resurrection. We have just listened to the Passion of our Lord. We might well ask ourselves just one question: Who am I? Who am I, before my Lord? Who am I, before Jesus who enters Jerusalem amid the enthusiasm of the crowd? Am I ready to express my joy, to praise him? Or do I stand back? Who am I, before the suffering Jesus?

We have just heard many, many names. The group of leaders, some priests, the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, who had decided to kill Jesus. They were waiting for the chance to arrest him. Am I like one of them?

We have also heard another name: Judas. Thirty pieces of silver. Am I like Judas? We have heard other names too: the disciples who understand nothing, who fell asleep while the Lord was suffering. Has my life fallen asleep? Or am I like the disciples, who did not realize what it was to betray Jesus? Or like that other disciple, who wanted to settle everything with a sword? Am I like them? Am I like Judas, who feigns love and then kisses the Master in order to hand him over, to betray him? Am I a traitor? Am I like those people in power who hastily summon a tribunal and seek false witnesses: am I like them? And when I do these things, if I do them, do I think that in this way I am saving the people?

Am I like Pilate? When I see that the situation is difficult, do I wash my hands and dodge my responsibility, allowing people to be condemned – or condemning them myself?

Am I like that crowd which was not sure whether they were at a religious meeting, a trial or a circus, and then chose Barabbas? For them it was all the same: it was more entertaining to humiliate Jesus.

Am I like the soldiers who strike the Lord, spit on him, insult him, who find entertainment in humiliating him?

Am I like the Cyrenean, who was returning from work, weary, yet was good enough to help the Lord carry his cross?

Am I like those who walked by the cross and mocked Jesus: “He was so courageous! Let him come down from the cross and then we will believe in him!”

Am I like those fearless women, and like the mother of Jesus, who were there, and who suffered in silence?

Am I like Joseph, the hidden disciple, who lovingly carries the body of Jesus to give it burial?

Am I like the two Mary’s, who remained at the Tomb, weeping and praying?

Am I like those leaders who went the next day to Pilate and said, “Look, this man said that he was going to rise again. We cannot let another fraud take place!”, and who block life, who block the tomb, in order to maintain doctrine, lest life come forth?

Where is my heart? Which of these persons am I like? May this question remain with us throughout the entire week.”

Pope Francis

