



LENT *Faith Conversations*

Week of March 28-April 3

Palm Sunday Readings: Before procession-Mark 11:1-10, Isaiah 50:4-7, Psalm 22, Philippians 2: 6-11, Mark 14:1-15:47

ADULT REFLECTION

No set of Lectionary readings take us on as jarring a ride as on Palm Sunday. The opening passage read prior to the procession into church tells the story of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. He is given the homage and honor typically given to royalty. Of course, most of these people greeting Jesus did not understand his mission. He would not meet *their* political, temporal expectations.

The Gospel proclaims the full *Passion* story according to Mark. It tells of the extraordinary events of Holy Thursday and Good Friday that led up to the public execution of Jesus as a criminal against Judaism and the Roman Empire. The man hailed as king just a few days prior is now abandoned, reviled, tortured and killed. Jesus had every opportunity to escape his fate. But as terrible as his journey to the Cross was, he never wavered. He remained steadfast in his trust in the Father.

Does God need to change to fit our expectations? Or is it we who need to change our expectations to fit God's?

How does it feel to know that in Jesus, God has gone before us... facing terror and suffering and death? Does it change how you approach loss and suffering and loneliness?

Jesus spoke of taking up one's cross each day. He also spoke of taking up his yoke (an implement normally built for two) that is easy (or fits well). *What are the small (but meaningful) ways I am invited to take up my cross, or his yoke, each day? How can these images help me make these loving sacrifices joyfully?*

FAMILY CONVERSATION & PRAYER STARTERS

Why were people putting palm branches on the road as Jesus approached? What kind of king were they expecting? Is Jesus a king?

When we look at a crucifix (and perhaps hold and touch it), what does it tell us about God and God's love for us?

How can we, as a family, accompany Jesus closely this Holy Week? (Click here for ideas.)

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, inspire us to know how to accompany Jesus this Holy Week. Remind us of him often. Teach us how to joyfully take up our own little crosses – or hardships—each day. Create in us hearts that love like he loves. Amen.

FASTING

Give up thinking about yourself this week. Redirect your gaze to Jesus or those around you.

ALMSGIVING

Ask your pastor or parish leaders about opportunities to give hope and accompaniment to the imprisoned or the dying this week.