

Palm Sunday, April 14

Zechariah 9:9-12 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (v.9 NIV)

In biblical times, when most traveled on foot, horses and donkeys were symbols of power and wealth. The horse was used in war; however, the donkey was used in peaceful endeavors. They carried food, people, and goods. People rejoiced when they saw a donkey coming into their village.

How appropriate that Jesus arrived in Bethlehem, in vitro, on a donkey. The King of Kings came to bring peace and to take on our burdens. The Bread of Life was born in order to feed us. Now, coming into Jerusalem to face his death, he rides in on a donkey as well.

But the Messiah the people longed for, who would defeat the Romans by force, would have entered on a horse of war. The people missed the symbolism of Jesus entering on animal of peace, as well as the fulfilling of Zechariah's prophesy. The voices, who cried out "Hosanna," would become disillusioned and yell out "Crucify" in a matter of days.

How often do we want Jesus to do or be whom we want, then become disillusioned? What is our response?

Psalms 24, 25; 1 Timothy 6:12-16; Matthew 21:12-17

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Pray for: the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & The Middle East, The Most Revd Suheil Dawani - Archbishop, Jerusalem & the Middle East & Archbishop in Jerusalem

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Trinity Episcopal Church, Mattoon, The Rev. Jeffrey Kozuszek, Priest in Charge; Nkulusi Parish, Tanzania: Rev. Andrea Anania; The Mission of St. Luke, Cerro Colorado, Arequipa, Peru, Rev'd Ricardo Vergara, Vicar; Rev'd Nestor Mogollon, Deacon.

ST. MATTHEWS: Birthdays of Cris Embree and Roger Hollis

Monday, April 15

John 12:9-19 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him. (v.16)

It is easy to shake our heads in disbelief. How could these twelve men, who'd spent three years in constant presence of our Lord, not get it? They'd seen his miracles, listened to his sermons and parables, witnessed his power as they

traveled from village to village. Only after they received the Holy Spirit did the scales fall from their eyes, so to speak.

But to be honest, are we truly any different than they were? I have been a believer for decades, and there are times I still worry instead of trust, strike out on my own instead of waiting on God's timing, try to persuade Him to do things my way instead of bending to His will...until I let the Holy Spirit guide me.

The good news is that God knows we can be spiritually dense at times. Even so, Jesus went through the worst agony ever to ensure he bridged the gap between our sin and his righteousness. Then he sent us a helper.

Maybe, when we look back on the amazing ways he has moved in our lives, we, like the disciples, will realize in hindsight what Jesus has done.

Jeremiah 12:1-16; Psalm 51; Philippians 3:1-14

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Mississippi (*The Episcopal Church*) The Rt Revd Brian Seage; Western Massachusetts, The Rt Revd Douglas Fisher; Ifo (*Nigeria*) The Rt Revd Nathaniel Oladejo Ogundipe

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Show us your mercy, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Tuesday, April 16

Philippians 3:15-21 *Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.* (v.19)

I'm not a big TV watcher. But during a recent illness, I turned it on for several hours during the day and was shocked by the commercials. Most were about putting something in our mouths, be it a magic pill or a yummy, not-so-great-for-us snack. A few showed people being rude to each other as twisted humor. Still others hinted at illicit acts to be featured on an upcoming episode, I guess as shock-factor tantalizers. It left me thinking. Do advertisers truly believe people want to see, be, and act this way?

I guess nothing is new under the sun. Paul dealt with the same issues. The church in Philippi was exposed to the materialism of its metropolitan culture. He encouraged them to act according to Jesus' teachings instead of letting earthly things govern their thoughts. He'd most likely write the same to us today.

The Philippian church took his advice and grew into powerful witnesses of The Way. As we digest his letter to them, will we do the same?

Jeremiah 15:10-21; Psalms 6, 12; John 12:20-26

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Missouri (*The Episcopal Church*) The Rt Revd Wayne Smith; Western Mexico The Revd Ricardo Joel Gómez Osnaya

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Birthday of Karen, wife of The Rev. Michael J. Newago, Havana.

Wednesday, April 17

Psalm 55 *I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest."* (v.6)

Remember the commercial of a woman going through a horrid day? She dreams she is soaking blissfully in a hot bubble bath instead. "Take me away," she sighs. If you recently finished filing your taxes, you can probably relate.

Often, I have whispered the same thing when everything became overwhelming or went the way I didn't want it to. Lord, make it stop! Take me away!

However, I remind myself of one of my favorite verses in the Bible, from my favorite book in the Bible—Philippians: "I can do all things through him who gives me strength" (4:13). It is in the daily reading for today as well, and I don't see that as a coincidence.

Bubble baths are temporary reprieves. But eventually the aromatic foam dissipates and the water cools. Basking in the peace of our Lord is better. Anytime, day or night, we can let His loving peace soak into our pores. It may not change the circumstances, but it will improve our attitude and ability to cope.

Jeremiah 17:5-10, 14-17; Philippians 4:1-13; John 12:27-36

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Mityana (*Uganda*) The Rt Revd Stephen Kaziimba; Western Michigan (*The Episcopal Church*) The Rt Revd Whayne Hougland; Western New York, The Rt Revd Sean Rowe

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Almighty God, to truly know you is everlasting life.

Maundy Thursday, April 18

Jeremiah 20:7-11 *You deceived me, LORD, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed.* (v.7a)

Not the verse you'd pick to comment upon today? I understand. It doesn't sound like something Jesus would do, right? He would never deceive us.

And yet, Jesus often did something his disciples didn't expect. On the night Judas betrayed him, our Lord performed an act only the lowest of servants was meant to do. He bent down and washed their feet. A few of them, and many others, expected him to rise up to be the Messiah and defeat their enemies. Instead, he defeated something even greater—pride.

An old saying proclaims that both pride and sin have "I" in the center. As followers of Jesus, we are to die to self in order to live. Become weak so we can gain strength to battle death and win. Doesn't make sense to the world. Seems like a deception. But it is the overpowering truth.

Tonight, spend one hour with him in prayer as he asked his followers to do. Believe.

Psalm 102; 1 Corinthians 10:14-17, 11:27-32; John 17:1-26

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Mombasa (*Kenya*) The Rt Revd Alphonse Mwaro Baya; Western Newfoundland (*Canada*) The Rt Revd John Organ; Western North Carolina (*The Episcopal Church*) The Rt Revd José Antonio McLoughlin

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Church of the Redeemer, Cairo, admitted to the Diocese of Illinois, 1841.

ST. MATTHEWS: Sue Jones' birthday

Good Friday, April 19

John 13:36-38 *Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now?"* (v.37a)

Poor Peter. His heart was in the right place, but his humanness kept getting in the way. Jesus knew Peter was not ready yet to be the Rock he'd proclaimed Peter would become. Peter had trials to go through first.

On this day, our Lord died on the hard wood of the cross. Tradition states Peter later did as well, but requested to be hanged upside down in humility. By following Jesus, Peter followed him into eternity. But only after he'd made a few mistakes and then received forgiveness. Then, he humbly accepted his commission in the upper room by his Risen Lord: "Feed and care for my sheep" (see John 21:5-17).

Sometimes, God lets us go through trials to reveal we are still works in progress. We must learn from our mistakes in order to become humble enough to do it His way. Then we can receive His forgiveness and, by power from the cross, do what He calls us to do.

Genesis 22:1-4; Psalm 22; 1 Peter 1:10-20

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Monmouth (*Wales*) The Rt Revd Richard Pain; Western Tanganyika (*Tanzania*) The Rt Revd Sadock Makaya; Igbomina (*Nigeria*) The Rt Revd Emmanuel Adekola

DIOCESAN CYCLE: St. John's, Decatur, consecration of present church building, Birthday of The Rt. Rev. Anthony F.M. Clavier, Glen Carbon; Wedding Anniversary of The Rev. Beth H. Maynard and Mark Dirksen, Champaign.

Holy Saturday, April 20

Psalm 88 *Are your wonders known in the place of darkness, or your righteous deeds in the land of oblivion?* (v.12)

Did you notice there is no Gospel reading for today? That is because nothing is written in the Gospels about what happened on this day of limbo between the death and resurrection of Jesus. Church tradition states Jesus went into Hades to convert the souls who had gone before. This was later affirmed in the phrase "He descended into Hell," added into the Creeds in 650 AD. Others believe he rescued the faithful in the Old Testament, who slept in stasis, and escorted them into heaven.

The Bible may not be clear about what happened today, but it is clear on one thing: Jesus died yesterday. For me that is important.

He knows what it is like to go through that process. For those of us who believe in the resurrection, it is comforting to know that, not only does Jesus wait for us on the other side of death, but he has been through it and will guide us through it as well. And for that, I will be eternally grateful. Won't you?

Job 19:21-27a; Hebrews 4:1-16

ANGLICAN CYCLE: Montana (*The Episcopal Church*) The Rt Revd C. Franklin Brookhart; Wiawso (*West Africa*) The Rt Revd Abraham Kobina Ackah; Igbomina - West (*Nigeria*) The Rt Revd Olajide Adebayo

DIOCESAN CYCLE: Savior of the world, by your cross and precious blood you have redeemed the world.

ST. MATTHEWS: Morgan Kimmerling's birthday

by Julie B Cosgrove

Used with permission from the BIBLE READING FELLOWSHIP

PO Box 380, Winter Park, FL 32790

www.biblereading.org

Pray for the sick and those in distress: Charlie, Robin L., Margret L.

Pray for the Faithful Departed:

Pray for those living in nursing homes and other shut-ins: Dale B., Barb W., Daniel T., Bob C., and Margaret P.

Pray for: The Diocese of Tabora, Anglican Church of Tanzania, The Rt. Rev. Elias Chakupewa, the clergy and people. The Missionary Diocese of Peru, The Rt. Rev. Alejandro Mesco. Fr. Kari Marcelle, the clergy and people of Holy Trinity St. Vincent. Fr. Dave and all clergy, for whom we light the candle on the west side of the Altar.