

SUNDAY PLUS

Hosanna!

Two different processions



Christians walk to commemorate Jesus' journey from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, Israel, on Palm Sunday. Ryan Rodrick Beiler /Shutterstock.com

by Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

Crowds can be impulsive and unpredictable. As politicians and public speakers know, crowds can move from adulation to hostility, from respect to aggression, from a raised eyebrow to an angry fist. As one of my old professors, after a long life in public speaking, advised me: "Audiences can shift mood so quickly: never lecture in a room where there is only one exit."

The changeable nature of the Jerusalem crowd is highlighted in the Gospel readings today. We

are invited to follow two processions: one is a crowded procession into the city of Jerusalem, with multitudes joyfully waving palm branches while proclaiming alleluias as they greet Jesus as Messiah. The other is a lonely sorrowful way to an appointment with death on top of a disused quarry. Now no crowds exult in Jesus; no shouts welcome him with alleluias. This procession is covered in a hush of deadly silence. Led by silent soldiers who have graduated in the art of brutality, it will end with a scream: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

What, you wonder, made Jesus endure it all? We

get a strong impression from the Gospels that Jesus accepted the cross long before it was laid on his shoulders: to him the cross was not so much surprise as destiny. Jesus sensed that the cross would not only test him but define him. It would be the price he paid for the values he cherished, the kind of people he specially loved, the authorities he castigated. His teaching is something that we sense: love often makes its way with a cross on its back.

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications: www.rpbooks.co.uk

The Donkey

by G. K. Chesterton

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born.

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

G. K. Chesterton is one of the best-known Catholic writers of the early twentieth century.

Love gave courage

by Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

Someone who is fearless is not brave. A brave person does what is right in spite of being afraid – even terrified. Courage means overcoming moments and occasions of sheer terror. When Jesus entered Jerusalem and was greeted as the son of David, he knew that he was watched; that he took his life in his hands when he mounted the donkey and rode through cheering crowds and

waving palms. There could only be one end to Palm Sunday: a painful death.

Jesus was human: he must have been scared, perhaps catching glimpses of Roman soldiers and Temple authorities, drawn by the noise and the crowd. Yet he also knew that he had no alternative: to deny his father now would have rendered Jesus' teaching worthless and hollow.

In spite of his fear, Jesus kept on going. His love for his father was greater than the agony which lay ahead of him a few days later. Love gave him courage.

Sr Janet Fearn is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

Jesus, when I'm scared, give me courage. Walk beside me when I'm lost. Amen.

“ I invite you during this week to gaze often upon this ‘royal seat of God’, to learn about the humble love which saves and gives life, so that we may give up all selfishness, and the seeking of power and fame.

Pope Francis

Today:
Procession: Mark 11:1-10 or John 12:12-26
Mass: Isaiah 50:4-7
Philippians 2:6-11
Mark 14:1 – 15:47

Monday:
Isaiah 42:1-7
John 12:1-11

Tuesday:
Isaiah 49:1-6
John 13:21-33, 36-38

Wednesday:
Isaiah 50:4-9
Matthew 26:14-25

Thursday:
Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper:
Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-15

Friday:
The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord:
Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12
Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9
John 18:1 – 19:42

Saturday:
Romans 6:3-11
Mark 16:1-7

Next Sunday:
Acts 10:34, 37-43
Colossians 3:1-4
or 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
John 20:1-9