



Pastor's Corner

Dear friends,

This is the holiest week in the church year. It started on Palm Sunday, when people processed into the sanctuary waving their palm branches, just as people did almost 2,000 years ago as Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem on a donkey. It is believed, by scholars, to have occurred at the same time as the Roman governor of Jerusalem Pontius Pilate was parading into the other side of Jerusalem on his dazzling war horse, surrounded by scores of Roman soldiers, as a sign of power and intimidation, in order to keep the multitudes of people gathering for the Passover in their places. In comparison to this mighty display of power, Jesus' procession into Jerusalem seems almost insignificant. But it wasn't.

Maundy Thursday is the night Jesus instituted the sacrament of Holy Communion with the words, *"this is my body broken for you, this is my blood shed for you. Do this in remembrance of me."* It was during this meal that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and commanded them to do likewise; and then he revealed that one of his followers would betray him. After the meal, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray that God would remove the cup of trial in store for him, but ends with his words of acceptance, *"but not my will but thy will be done."* And then Jesus is betrayed by Judas for thirty pieces of silver and taken into custody.

The following day, Good Friday, Jesus is tried, sentenced to death, and crucified on a cross. Matthew tells us that at that moment, *"the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised."* It's as if we can see God's grief manifested in the splitting open of the curtain and the rocks.

On Holy Saturday, some churches hold an Easter Vigil to await the events of Sunday morning, and retell the ways in which God has saved his people time and again throughout history. Historically, it was the night on which Christians would be baptized, so often the Vigil involves members reaffirming their baptismal vows, recommitting themselves to following Jesus.

Which brings us to the day which defines us: Resurrection Sunday, God's triumphant victory over death. Easter is the promise that we, too, will experience the Resurrection and have victory over death. And this promise changes everything. It changes our perspective on our lives and on this world. It brings hope to all that seems hopeless. It brings Life to all that seems dead. It redeems all pain with the promise of Easter joy.

Praise, betrayal, pain, sorrow, joy—Holy Week takes us through all the emotions. It can be overwhelming to feel all of these things, but if we can journey with Jesus through this week, we will find ourselves transformed. If we can feel the weight of Thursday and Friday, we will more fully know the joy of Easter Sunday. Feel it! Experience it! It will make all the difference. I wish you a most blessed and meaningful Holy Week.

Pastor Kara

