

Rise & Shine March

The Church is preparing for the most life-changing experience imaginable, represented by the liturgical and prayerful participation in Holy Week. To casual observers and serious skeptics, it makes no sense! From the moment the palms are treaded upon and the Hosannas fade away on Palm Sunday, life gets very messy and ugly and hellish for Jesus and his loved ones – symbolically, even for us. Why do faithful Christians muster up their courage to join Jesus on this journey into the worst of humanity and cosmic evil combined? We don't particularly enjoy being reminded of the suffering of the world, the people in our lives, and our own pain. Culture says avoid it at all costs. Jesus say let me take you there. Richard Rohr says, "Jesus moved into the pain of the world to reveal it, to identify with it, and thus to transform it." Jesus shows us "how" and "why" in his last days.

The sacred journey of Holy Week is preserved and re-experienced liturgically. Palm Sunday is the introduction to the power of God to transform suffering and sin with redemption and hope. Our own lives can be greatly transformed when we journey with Jesus between the Palms and the empty tomb.

- Come and travel the Stations of the Cross with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, followed by the comfort and hope of the Eucharist.
- Come to the Table for Soul Supper. Be part of the turning point where servant leadership and self-giving show us how to be like Jesus, and the way to re-member his truth and power every time we gather for Holy Communion.
- Stay for the stripping of the altar, a symbolic dis-membering of the body of Christ in the symbolic emptiness after Jesus was taken in the Garden.
- On Good Friday come for the sacred journey into the depths of human suffering and evil with the deep assurance of God's transforming love. Midday the church is open for personal prayer and self-guided reflection on "The Seven Last Words from the Cross." In the evening prayer, music, scripture, reflection, and a final journey through the Stations of the Cross bring us to the paradox that all shall be well, even when all we see is the cross.
- Holy Saturday reminds us of the aftermath: abandoned, scared, lost, we prayerfully gather in God's hidden presence before re-assembling the church for Resurrection.

On the Day of Resurrection those who travel Holy Week with Jesus are especially renewed and lit up with the glory of God and the joy of discovering that Jesus was right: God's life is greater than death; God's love is greater than evil; and God's good will is able to transform the worst possible suffering into new life in God's love. As Resurrection people we are called to know this by our willingness to face the pain of life knowing God is with us. As we live like we believe, so then the world will believe.

Faithfully,

Mother Christina