

## Triumphal Entry Ahead

This weekend's Liturgy commemorates the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. What a spectacle! Jesus is aware of the Romans' practice of making a "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem, as well as other places: Warriors on horses (a luxurious method of travel in those days; think Hummer), dress uniforms, plumage, banners, flags, and more.

So Jesus, always turning the tables, chooses to make His own triumphal entry something of a parody of the mighty Romans' display of power. He rides an "ass," a beast of burden. His followers wave palm branches, which in the American Southwest you have to pay people to haul away as trash, and they put their own tattered cloaks on the ground to smooth his path into the city. Their cheers are true, whether they are aware of it or not: Hosanna to the Son of David!

As a parish, we are about to make our own triumphal entry into our spiritual house, our parish church. It has been renovated quite beautifully, with added space that will enhance our experience of gathering for worship. And we are overcoming two kinds of "exile" — we've been hunkered down in the parish hall, which has served us well even without adding much beauty to the occasion, and we have been constrained by precautions against the Covid virus.

We will be free of the parish hall as of Easter, and the Covid restrictions are cautiously lifting, even if only a little. Care for others will need to be a part of our life for some time to come, but it will get easier.

For Jesus, things did not get better after his triumphal entry. In fact, in the Palm Sunday Liturgy, we start with joyous Hosannas and some 10 minutes later we are kneeling at the proclamation of His death.

As we will celebrate later in Holy Week, He shares the Last Supper with His disciples, and then is arrested, tried, scourged, and crucified.

Following our triumphal entry into our new worship space, we are not likely to experience the violent suffering and death of Jesus. But we are called to the Table of Word and Eucharist to be nourished and fortified for the mission to which we are called: to evangelize by word and action, to serve with humility (wash feet), to bring the good news of salvation to those around us.

Jesus's embrace of His mission brought salvation to the world. His faithfulness to His Father's will brought Him to the cross, but also to victory over death.

Our embrace of God's will can't possibly be as complete as His, but by joining with Him through community, Word, and Sacrament, we will find the strength we need to take an active part in His work of salvation.

While crucifixion is highly unlikely for any of us, eternal life is well within the range of possibility — in fact it's a promise.

In our joy at returning to our church home, may we be mindful of the purpose of worship, of the sacraments, and of the effort we have made: to be the Presence of Christ in our community, our family, and our world.

*We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you, for by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world!*