

Today we enter the most holy week of the Christian year. On this day we begin the journey through Holy Week, marking specific points along the way (Maundy Thursday where we remember the Sacrament of service and the institution of the Eucharist; Good Friday when we gather in the shadow of the cross, and the Easter Vigil, where we celebrate the lighting of the new fire) toward our final destination; the joy of the resurrection and Easter Day.

The image of journey is crucial to Holy Week. That journey relates to Jesus and, to a lesser extent, to his disciples and followers. In the coming week, after Jesus has entered triumphantly into Jerusalem, he journeys, metaphorically with his disciples, attempting to explain to them what is to come, speaking in parables about withered fig trees, and the destruction of the temple. He is anointed by Mary of Bethany, in preparation for his approaching death – each event moves inexorably toward the events of Good Friday and beyond. And his disciples also journey – they move emotionally from a place of unknowing, to proclamations of faith; to promises of faithfulness, then finally to a place of fear and doubt, and complete non-understanding.

We are also on a journey ourselves, this week, and the liturgies you attend during the week are but a part of this journey. Much of it is also an internal journey, one where our emotions and moods and even our faith are challenged, where we are also called to arrive at a point of joy and acceptance in our hearts, despite the apparent power that death may hold over us...

And that journey and that challenge begin today, Palm Sunday. Augustus Toplady, the 18th century Anglican Cleric and poet (perhaps best known for his hymn “Rock of Ages”), wrote the following about Palm Sunday: “When Christ entered into Jerusalem the people spread garments in the way; when He enters into our hearts, we pull off our own righteousness, and not only lay it under Christ’s feet but even trample upon it ourselves.” This sort of confronting image suits well the difficult journey we must make.

I urge you to join others in this journey at some of the many services offered in the parish this week. I especially commend to you the service of Tenebrae, to be held at Christ Church, on Good Friday, at 5pm. This is a joint service between our two parishes (we will host it next year), in line with our covenant commitment to sharing in worship together.

May all the Saints walk with you on your journey through this most Holy Week...

Sam