

A LITTLE PEP TALK FOR PALM SUNDAY

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Today we begin the best week in the whole liturgical year. Centuries ago it was called the "Great Week". Nowadays we call it "Holy Week". We walk with Jesus every step of the way. We start with his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, where he is welcomed, applauded and acclaimed, by a big crowd of followers. On Thursday we join him at table, listen closely to his words, and receive the gift of himself in signs of bread and wine. After dining with him we take his path from the Upper Room to the Garden of Olives. There, with tears welling in our eyes, we watch him falling to the ground, in fear and dread of the cruel and barbaric death awaiting him.

Friday finds us standing in solidarity with his mother at the foot of his cross and feeling compassion for him in his physical agony and mental torment. There we will experience with him at least a little of his sense of being largely alone and abandoned, betrayed and deserted, not only by friends and followers, but even by God.

Saturday will find us quiet and silent around his tomb, as we remember the injustice, hostility and cruelty, of all those evil men who murdered him in cold blood. Then, late on Saturday, we will move from the darkness of our shared journey to the place of the brightly burning fire. From there we will join the procession of the great Easter Candle symbolizing the risen Christ, as he lights up the darkness of our church and lives.

There and then, the pain and sadness of our journey with Jesus to Calvary, will give way to the hope and joy that comes from our renewed awareness. Jesus Christ is not dead and gone. He has not abandoned us. No! He is alive, strong and powerful, alive in himself, and alive in us through the gift of his Spirit, his second self. And so we will be hearing afresh in our minds and hearts, those reassuring words that Juliana of Norwich heard from his own lips in her famous fourteen century vision of Christ crucified: "*All shall be well, and all shall be well, and every kind of things will be well!*"

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"May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our minds and hearts, so that the life of Jesus too may be in us!"