

A PEP TALK FOR PALM SUNDAY

'Keep in mind that Jesus Christ has died for us and is risen from the dead. He is our saving Lord, he is joy for all ages' [Lucien Deiss]

We have already begun 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 road to Calvary.

We have started today with his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. There we have joined the crowds acclaiming, welcoming, and applauding him as their Saviour. We have done so with boundless enthusiasm and joy.

On Thursday we will gather around his table. Once again we'll hear and take to heart his own commandment: *'Love one another as I have loved you.'* Once again we'll receive the loving gift of himself in bread and wine. Then at the end of the meal we will set out with him along the path from the Upper Room to the Garden of Olives. There we'll see him falling to the ground in fear and anxiety over the cruel and unjust death awaiting him. And as we see and hear him sobbing his heart out and even sweating drops of blood, our hearts will go out to him and our own eyes will fill up with tears.

Friday will find us standing with his mother and a few faithful friends at the foot of the cross. We will be moved with compassion both for her and for him in their mental and physical torments. We'll feel some of his sense of being alone and abandoned, betrayed and deserted, not only by friends and followers, but even by God.

On Saturday we will be quiet and silent around his tomb as we keep remembering the injustice, cruelty, hatred and hostility of all those evil men that murdered him. Then late on Saturday we will go from the darkness of the Way of the Cross to the place of the brightly burning fire. There we'll join the procession of the great Easter Candle, that stands for the risen Christ, the Light of the World, lighting up the darkness of our church, our world, and our lives. There and then the pain and sadness of our journey with Jesus will give way to the hope and joy that comes from our rekindled faith. Jesus Christ is not dead and gone after all! No! He is very much alive, strong and powerful, alive in himself, and alive in us through his Spirit!

And so we will hear in both our heads and hearts those comforting and re-assuring words which Jesus Christ Crucified spoke to Juliana of Norwich in the quiet of her convent cell: *'All will be well, all will be well, all manner of things will be well!'*

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