

Palm/Passion Sunday  
Wicker Park Lutheran Church  
Rev. Jason S. Glombicki  
April 9th, 2017

Today is arguably the most confusing liturgical day. We start with joy shouting hosanna and processing around the neighborhood. Within moments, our direction changes to Jesus' suffering and death. It's important to remember that Jesus' procession was not a first-century version of a World Series Championship parade. This entry was a statement – a political and religious statement. It signified that Jesus was the returning king and the Messiah. Those laying cloaks and branches expected Jesus to overthrow the Romans and to change the religious order. This simple journey was an act of defiance, and it informs us why Jesus was killed.<sup>1</sup> Jesus' transportation indicated future. Instead of riding on a horse like a war-raging king, Jesus arrived on a donkey, which symbolized peace.

Today we continue reading the passion narrative in Matthew. Today we will see Jesus troubled and sorrowful. We will see Jesus abandoned. We will see a secret nighttime governmental trial. We will meet Pilate's wife following a dream. Today we will see guards posted at Jesus' tomb.

During this passion reading I encourage you to be present. If needed, pull up the story on the internet or grab a bible in the narthex to follow along. You are also invited to verbally respond as printed in the bulletin during some sections. In those responses, we become part of the story.

Are we pretending to be physically present? No. Instead we step into the story knowing that this story is the story of human existence. We can vividly see the parallels to our world today. For this story is a story where power attempts to dominate compassion. This is a story of sacrificing a

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.davidlose.net/2017/04/palmpassion-sunday-a/>

human for monetary gain. This story shows the extremes a religion might go to preserve purity and control. This is a story of hopelessness in systems of oppression. This story shows an empire silencing the oppressed. This is a story of denial and shifting responsibility. This story shows the spread of fake news. This story is filled with abuse, coercion, and fearmongering. This is a story where people kill and torture for their own self-interests. This, this is our everyday story. This is the story of our world. This is a story we support and in which we are actively complicit. This story is the story of us.

In this story, our story, sit with the pain and confusion today – hold it, like the palms; grasp it, like the bread; and feel it, like Christ’s suffering. Ponder what this story teaches us about our God. Learn from it about leadership, love, and grace. Then keep walking until we gather at the Easter Vigil. Keep walking in the pain, walk with each other in the uncertainty, and remember that God both understands your heartache and walks with you. Come, now, enter into this story ... our story...