

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Christ did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but ... humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him ... that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ...

Philippians 5:6-11

We come into church today carrying palms and singing hymns of triumph. Palms are a sign of victory; palms are for waving, like flags. But palms are better than flags; palms are almost as good as balloons; palms are *fun*: fun to slit apart and smell their juicy sweetness, fun to wave around, fun to make things out of, fun to snap like whips. And carrying a palm is like wearing a crown or a robe, or carrying a banner: you can just play with it, or you can let it make you feel solemn, special, and splendid. So today we carry palms and play with palms—play at being clowns and kings, princesses and priests, exulting in God's favor toward us. We will come again, one week from today, in victory again, wearing our best clothes and singing alleluias, with the church full of flowers, perfume and light. But for those alleluias to ring true, we must, in the days between, stand before the Cross, and come to terms with the outrageous claim of our faith, that it is through the anguish, abandonment and tortured death of this one man, nearly two thousand years ago, that we may claim joy, hope and new life.

Each of today's Scriptures tells of the utter desolation of God's chosen one. Each one goes down into agony and abandonment, where the face of God is covered and the hand of God is powerless to help. And each one ends with the promise that out of that very abandonment comes freedom, new life, vindication and joy. Easter does not come *after* the Cross, it comes *out of* the Cross. The Church does not believe in life *after* death, but in life *out of* death. Christ became obedient unto death; and, we are told, *therefore* God has highly exalted him: his death is precisely the key to his triumph. The Cross is not a temporary setback in an otherwise brilliant career; Easter is not a stunning recovery after a near-disaster. The Cross of Good Friday and the Alleluia of Easter are the same thing. We cannot have one without the other.

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Year A
PALM
SUNDAY



THIS IS PALM SUNDAY.

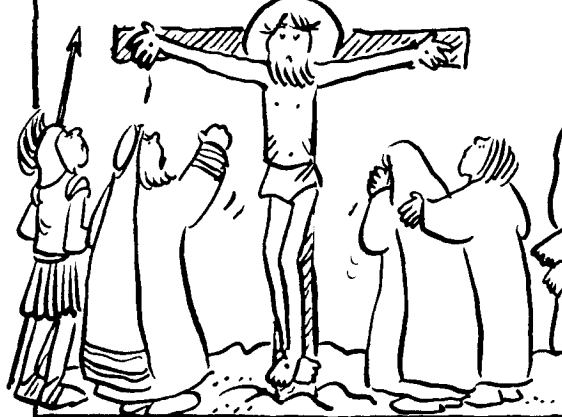
Jesus came to Jerusalem. People waved palms and shouted, "Hosanna!"



On Thursday of that week, Jesus shared bread and wine with his friends. But Jesus had enemies, too.



That night, his enemies found him and took him to jail. On Friday, he was killed on a cross.



Jesus's friends took his body down, and buried it in a cave tomb.



Palm Sunday is the first day of HOLY WEEK. This week, we remember how Jesus gave up his life for us. On MAUNDY THURSDAY, we remember his Last Supper with his friends. On GOOD FRIDAY we remember how he died on the cross. We call it "good," because Jesus died to bring us new life.

At the end of Holy Week, it is EASTER! Put the month and days on the calendar, and decorate it.

HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
MAUNDY THURSDAY	GOOD FRIDAY	HOLY SATURDAY	EASTER SUNDAY