

Palm Sunday – Ride on, Ride in in Majesty



Introduction

The most frequent way of praying that Saint Ignatius uses is that of imagining ourselves in a Gospel scene. We imagine ourselves as a character in the story. We take part in the story, seeing Jesus and all the other people, being aware of what's going on and how we are feeling. The purpose of praying with the imagination is to allow Christ in the Scripture to speak to us. To bring the Gospel stories to life for us. We are not trying to recreate history. It doesn't matter if your imagination takes the story off in a different direction to the Scripture. It doesn't matter if the story takes place in 1st century Palestine or where we live now in the 21st century. What is important is what God wants to say to us through this passage.

Sit and relax by focussing on your breathing for a few minutes so that you can contemplate the Gospel using our imagination.

Prayer

Acknowledge you are in the presence of God by saying the following prayer:

Direct O Lord and guide and influence all that is happening in my mind and heart during this time of prayer: all my moods and feelings, my memories and imaginings; my hopes and desires; may all be directed and influenced to your greater glory, praise and service and to my growth in your Spirit. Amen

Let the Spirit guide and enlighten your mind as we ask for the grace to journey with Jesus during this Holy Week.

Reading Mark 11:1-10

When they were approaching Jerusalem, in sight of Bethphage and Bethany, close by the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, 'Go off to the village facing you, and as soon as you enter it you will find a tethered colt that no one has yet ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone says to you, "What are you doing?" say, "The Master needs it and will send it back here directly".'

They went off and found a colt tethered near a door in the open street. As they untied it, some men standing there said, 'What are you doing, untying that colt?' They gave the answer Jesus had told them, and the men let them go.

Then they took the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on its back, and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, others greenery which they had cut in the fields. And those who went in front and those who followed were all shouting, 'Hosanna! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessings on the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest heavens!'

Contemplation

Today, Palm Sunday, we enter the solemn drama of Holy week starting with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, after having journeyed up from Galilee through Samaria. Holy Week is the climax

of the Church's year, as we journey with Jesus towards the feast of Easter. Note that Jesus comes not to the Temple but to the Mount of Olives. Jesus mounts a colt on which no one has yet ridden and begins his journey to Jerusalem amidst a crowd singing from Psalm 117.

With this in mind, imagine the scene, find a place within it. With the help of the Spirit, let the story unfold in your imagination.

- Who are you within the story? Are you one of the disciples? One of the crowd? Perhaps you are the donkey on which Jesus was sitting? Perhaps you are someone or something not mentioned in the passage?
- What time of day is it? What is the atmosphere like? Is it hot? Is the atmosphere full of tension, anticipation, excitement?
- If you are one of the disciples, are you the one who followed Jesus' instructions regarding the collection of the colt? Did you have to walk far to fetch the colt? Were you surprised that the scenario played out as Jesus had said?
- Can you imagine being there with Jesus, as he is about to enter Jerusalem? How did you feel? Did you feel the impulse to put your garments on this beast of burden for Jesus to sit on and on the road ahead of Jesus? Why? Do you feel that Jesus deserves a triumphal entry into Jerusalem? That everyone should know he is coming?
- Did you wonder why Jesus was making his journey on a colt? Did you wonder if it was to show that he was entering the city in peace as opposed to a conquering king? Did you wonder if it was to fulfil the prophet Zechariah "Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey"?
- Are you one of the crowd? If so, where are you in the crowd? At the front? On the margins? Why are you there? Have you heard about Jesus and want to see him? How did you know he was coming? Were you waving a palm? Were you singing Hosanna to welcome Jesus? Did you believe he was a saviour?
- What did you notice about the crowd? Were they excited? Hysterical? Joyful?
- What did you notice about the disciples following Jesus? What look did they have on their faces? Excited? Proud?

- What did you notice about Jesus? What look did he have on his face? Was he showing any emotion?

Is there anything you want to say to Jesus about what you have just witnessed, been part of? Tell him how you feel.

End Prayer Suscipe of St. Ignatius of Loyola

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding,
and my entire will,
All I have and call my own.
You have given all to me.
To you, Lord, I return it.
Everything is yours; do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace,
that is enough for me.