



*For this special Holy Week issue, we want to offer only enough to help you enter the spirit of worship to which this week beckons us every year. The added white space is intentional, as is the lack of commentary for the image on page 4. We encourage you to read slowly. May God fill your week ahead with His silence and His self.*

## Foreknowledge

by Jeanne Murray Walker (contemporary American poet)

I think he planned it, sort of, from the start,  
 whether he knew they'd choose fruit or not.  
 He scattered hints around the garden, what to do  
 in case they got themselves kicked out. A shirt  
 of fur around the lamb. The stream converting  
 water into syllables. Bamboo pipes.  
 The caps of mushrooms round as wheels.  
 Bluebirds composing tunes. He knew nothing  
 they started later would be new. Except he  
 didn't factor in the thorns, how they would smart  
 as Adam—leaving—drove one through his foot.  
 How clever Romans would invent a crown.  
 He didn't figure weeds could break his heart.

*This poem was taken from Between Midnight and Dawn: A Literary Guide to Prayer for Lent, Holy Week, and Eastertide, Paraclete, 2016.*

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## **Journeys** by Kathleen Norris (from *God For Us: Rediscovering the Meaning of Lent and Easter*)

The hard truth about journeys is that they demand that we embrace the unknown. We may embark with high hopes—accepting a marriage proposal, receiving news of a long-desired pregnancy—or with dread—the diagnosis is an inoperable and metastasized cancer—but we actually know very little about what will be demanded of us along the way, let alone what the outcome will be. Even the most humdrum day is a journey in this sense; upon rising in the morning we utter our prayers inattentively, as a demanding to-do list looms in our minds, but we can't foresee what we'll accomplish during the next twenty-four hours. We don't even know if this day, and those halfhearted prayers, will be our last. We count ourselves lucky if we can shove these dread thoughts aside and go about our business.

*Why do we have to hear it all again this year? Why go through yet another round of Holy Week liturgies?*

The difficult thing for us about Holy Week is that we think we do know all about the journey that Jesus and his disciples make from Palm Sunday to Easter. We believe we know how that journey ends; at least we've heard the story many times. Why do we have to hear it all again this year? Why go through yet another round of Holy Week liturgies?

To experience a meaningful Holy Week requires a great leap, not only of faith, but of imagination. We are asked to suspend our belief in the scientific method, which replicates experiments in order to replicate results. Our goal in Holy Week is different: we go through the familiar readings and rituals as we've done for years, but we're hoping that something new will emerge from those ancient stories. We are seeking something more than what's on the surface, and in order to find it we must begin by seeking something less, the humble but thorough joy of children.

On Palm Sunday we stand with the glad crowds who welcome Jesus into Jerusalem shortly before the annual Passover rituals, marveling that our ordinary day has turned extraordinary, with a homegrown parade and singing, dancing in the streets, and the enthusiastic waving of palm branches. Even if we can barely recall the joyful faith of our childhood, we might recall the wonder of what the author of "Amazing Grace" calls "the hour I first believed."

We will need all the certainty of that faith, for our Palm Sunday readings quickly bring us to the heart of suffering. The Gospel takes us into Gethsemane, where Jesus is betrayed and arrested; soon we are hearing the story of his condemnation and death. Palm Sunday reminds us that our world can turn on a dime, that sudden changes in our circumstances can take us straight from praise to lament. But in exercising our God-given imagination, like the poet who first sang Psalm 22, we might also allow God to help us turn our most painful lament into praise.

This is the journey of Holy Week; this is the journey of our lives.

## O Deus, ego amo te

by Gerard Manley Hopkins (English poet, 1844-1889)

O God, I love thee, I love thee—  
Not out of hope of heaven for me  
Nor fearing not to love and be  
    In the everlasting burning.  
Thou, thou, my Jesus, after me  
    Didst reach thine arms out dying,  
For my sake sufferedst nails and lance  
Mocked and marred countenance,  
    Sorrows passing number,  
    Sweat and cave and cumber,  
Yea and death, and this for me,  
    And thou couldst see me sinning:  
Then I, why should not I love thee,  
Jesu so much in love with me?  
Not for heaven's sake; not to be  
Out of hell by loving thee;  
Not for any gains I see;  
But just the way that thou didst me  
I do love and I will love thee:  
What must I love thee, Lord, for then?—  
For being my king and God. Amen.

*This poem was taken from Between Midnight and Dawn: A Literary Guide to Prayer for Lent, Holy Week, and Eastertide, Paraclete, 2016.*



**Agony In The Garden**  
by Paul Gauguin (1889; France)

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## Rosing from the Dead

by Paul J. Willis (contemporary American poet)

We are on our way home  
from Good Friday service.  
It is dark. It is silent.  
“Sunday,” says Hanna,  
“Jesus will be rosing  
from the dead.”

It must have been like that.  
A white blossom, or maybe  
a red one, pulsing  
from the floor of the tomb, reaching  
around the Easter stone  
and levering it aside  
with pliant thorns.

The soldiers overcome  
with the fragrance,  
and Mary at sunrise  
mistaking the dawn-dewed  
Rose of Sharon  
for the untameable Gardener.

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