

Sixth Sunday in Lent; Confirmation; Palm Sunday; April 13, 2025

+ Luke 19:28-40 +

Jesus is the One to Stay With

**After Jesus had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. As he came near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ahead, saying, “Go to the village ahead of you. When you enter it, you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. And if anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you will say this: ‘The Lord needs it.’”**

**Those who were sent ahead went and found things just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?”**

**They said, “The Lord needs it.”**

**Then they brought the colt to Jesus. They threw their robes on the colt and set Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their robes on the road. As he was approaching the slope of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began to praise God joyfully, with a loud voice, for all the miracles they had seen, saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”**

**Some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!**

**He replied, “I tell you, if these people would be silent, the stones would cry out.”**

Today God is giving us the joy of confirming two young friends in their baptismal grace, while also celebrating our Savior’s Palm Sunday ride. Whenever we confirm people of any age and welcome them to the Lord’s Supper, there is always a hope and prayer in our hearts: “Lord, keep them faithful to you. Help them keep the promise they are making to suffer all things rather than fall away from you. Keep them in the Christian faith to the end.”

We want them to stay with Jesus. And I want to use the Palm Sunday Gospel to show you why. The events of Palm Sunday tell us everything we need to know about the importance – and pleasure – of staying with Jesus Christ. That’s what we want for Carice and Mary. It’s what Jesus wants for them, too. He wants it for all of us! Maybe you currently are not with him. Here is why you should be. Maybe you are with him, but following him at a distance. Here’s why you should get right up next to him. Maybe you’ve got him at arm’s length. Here’s why you should slide over closer to him. Or maybe you’re shoulder to shoulder with the Son of God. Here’s why you should get your arms around him. This is why Jesus is good to be with – and stay with.

**After Jesus had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.** What things had Jesus said? A lot of things, things we’ve been hearing on each of these Sundays in Lent. But here’s one of them: **He took the Twelve aside and said to them, “Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. Indeed, he will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, mistreat him, spit on him, and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.”**

St. Luke goes on to say that Jesus’ disciples do not understand what he is saying, although Jesus is speaking plainly. In their defense, it’s not every day that you hear someone predict his own violent death and

resurrection from the dead. So, they thought Jesus was speaking in riddles and rhymes, and they did not understand. But Jesus did. It was with his eyes wide open that Jesus rode down the Mount of Olives into the capital city, with full and clear knowledge of what was going to happen to him.

There are some few people in history who have gone into missions knowing they would die. There is only one who did it knowing he would die the eternal death we deserved. Jesus went to suffer hell on the cross, total separation from his heavenly Father. He did that because he rode into Jerusalem with a head full of clear knowledge and also a heart full of love for you and me and the whole world. This is how much Jesus loves you: he rides in knowing he will die for you; he will die the eternal death you deserved.

And here is how you know it's true: he also predicted and achieved his Easter resurrection. Jesus knew how all of this would end: with the punishment you deserved gone and a ticket to come out of the grave right behind him.

No one loves you like Jesus. No one has done as much for you as he has. No one else will call you out of the grave, sins forgiven, to heaven's glory. He is the one you want to stay with.

Your next excellent reason for staying with Jesus is in some subtler details. He knows where to find a donkey and how to get its owners to lend it. And when he is set on that unbroken donkey, the donkey submits and lets him ride. Those are not things sinful human beings are capable of. They are only possible because Jesus is who he told he disciples to say he is: The Lord, who knows all things. The Lord, who controls nature. He rides humbly to die, but he never stops being God.

And now that his mission is accomplished, Jesus, still God, lives again. He still knows things, including everything about you. He has the hairs on your head numbered; he knows all your needs and your wants and how best to satisfy them. He knows the what and why of your struggles even better than you do. And Jesus still rules all creation for the good of his Church, all those who believe in him. So he has the love, knowledge, and power to work all things, even the worst things, for your eternal good. He has even turned the worst thing of all into the best thing of all: the gate to eternal life.

Jesus knows all things – including you – and has the power to do all things for you. He is the one you want to stay with.

**As he was approaching the slope of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began to praise God joyfully, with a loud voice, for all the miracles they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"**

The King of kings rode into Jerusalem on a mission of peace. If you come in the name of the Lord, you come in peace for those who believe in him, to conquer those who oppose him. Jesus rode into Jerusalem to bring between God and humankind by vanquishing the devil and our sin on the cross, by rising to defeat death. Through his work, we who were God's enemies by nature are now his children, living at peace with him today and always.

The Lord's name – what he is all about – is reconciling us to himself and being at peace with us. In that name Jesus comes into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. In that name of the Lord, Jesus still enters our hearts today. The Spirit moves us to lift up the gates of our heart as he rides in with peace through his Word, peace in his Supper, peace in sins forgiven.

And so we bless Jesus and give him glory today and always. And there is no higher blessing or glory than we can give than to stay with him, the King who comes in the Lord's name, with his eternal peace.

It was the mistake of the original Palm Sunday crowds to abandon Jesus later that week. It is our sinful mistake too, every time we leave his side for the world's pleasures, or to be our own masters, or to try to make our own peace with God, however we imagine that might be possible. Dear Jesus, move us to stay with you. Show us your divine determination to suffer and die and rise for us. Show us your perfect knowledge and power at work for us.

Show us yourself, the King of peace. And show us this: your first desire is for to draw us to yourself, and then for us to stay. Jesus, keep us in the one true faith always. With all your goodness and love, convince us: you are the one to stay with. Amen.