



“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven.”
Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him,
“Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” He answered,
“I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

— Luke 19:38-40

Jesus didn't start a religion as much as a movement: the arrival of the kingdom of heaven—or, in the language of this Lenten booklet, a journey aimed at healing a hurting world. On Palm Sunday, we mark a pivotal moment in that movement, recalling Jesus' triumphal procession into Jerusalem, the start of this most Holy Week that moves us toward the dark hours on the cross through to the light of Easter.

Today's procession launches the movement in many ways, but it's not the grand entrance of a conquering emperor, not an overwhelming display of military power. It's the spontaneous acclaim given a king riding on a donkey, a sign that the work of healing, the hope of the world, will come with simplicity and humility. The crowd goes wild as Jesus enters. In short order they will turn on him.

The liturgies in our churches today will capture that spiritual whiplash, moving quickly from festive celebration to the sad and somber Passion narrative. This special day gives us the opportunity to think about where we stand at the beginning of this Holy Week. Will we join in the movement that leads to the healing of a hurting world? Will we turn on it? Or maybe worse, will we just turn away?

—Jay Sidebotham