

## Grace Notes for March 26, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTl1Q8yudfM>

Dear Friends:

As we move towards Holy Week, there are four days of special focus. The First is Palm Sunday on which the readings take a very rapid turn from Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem to his condemnation and execution. We understand that processions with palms began in Jerusalem in

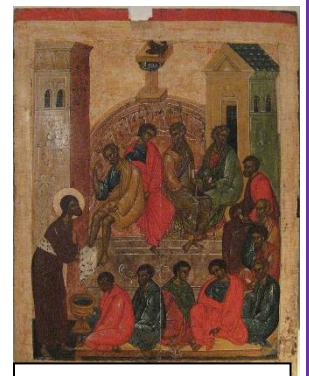


Assisi frescoes -Entry into Jerusalem by Pietro Lorenzetti

the fourth century, and in Europe in the eighth. The palms were often blessed in one church, paraded through the community to several churches and then returned to the original church for a lengthy liturgy which included the chanting of the Passion Narrative by three deacons. That palms were unavailable in certain areas led to olive, willow (pussy willows) or yew branches being used instead. Many Canadian Christians celebrate versions of the day as it was kept in the countries from which they or their ancestors came.

We try to keep our focus on Christ this week, avoiding unnecessary meetings and events unrelated to our observances in faith. Participating in the Way of the Cross, either in church or virtually is one of the ways in which we walk with the Lord. Bishop Barron's reflection on the Stations of the Cross is one of the sources I have found meaningful. <https://stations.wordonfire.org/stations-of-the-cross>

Holy Thursday – also called “Maundy Thursday” (from the Latin word “mandatum”, commandment, referring to Jesus' mandate to the disciples) – helps us to understand the great importance of the Eucharistic Liturgy. We learn of Jesus, as a Jew, gathering with his friends to keep the Passover feast of Unleavened Bread and, after demonstrating the importance of servant leadership in the washing of his followers' feet, using the unleavened bread and the wine to explain the meaning of his death and how he will continue to be with them – and us – after he returns to the Father. Our understanding of the “New Covenant”, based on the New Commandment, that we “love one another as I have loved you” comes from this event.



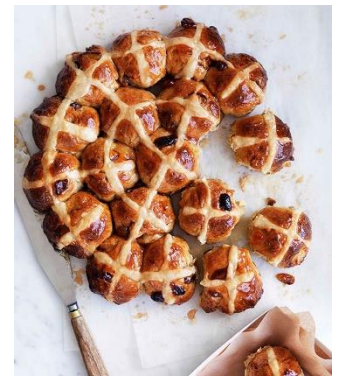
Orthodox icon of Christ washing the feet of the Apostles (16th C, Pskov school of iconography)

This year, Passover begins on the evening of March 27th for our Jewish friends.



What's "good" about Good Friday, you may ask. Those who study etymology tend to agree that it comes from an old use of the word 'good' as meaning 'holy'. We usually gather at the foot of the cross at 3 pm – held to be the hour at which Jesus died, and venerate the cross by kissing or touching it – acts which Covid-19 prevents for the second year in a row. In some areas, parish churches will be open for a curtailed version of Good Friday services. The already austere liturgy with the offering of pre-sanctified communion and the use of wooden clappers rather than bells will no doubt feel even more so.

Before Good Friday became a statutory holiday, there were those who had difficulty working: in Irish folklore, it was considered unlucky to saw wood or hammer a nail on this day. Fasting to various degrees of severity has been practised in many countries, and other folklore suggests avoiding foods made with vinegar or nettles(!). Hot cross buns, quite a delicious way to break our fast this day, may have come into Christian tradition from our pagan ancestors who ate spiced buns marked with crosses in celebration of Eostre, the goddess of spring. Good Queen Bess (Elizabeth I) forbade the sale of hot cross buns for other than Good Friday, burials and Christmas; she would no doubt have been scandalised that we can purchase them all year round and with such additions as chocolate chips, icing and candied cherries. The traditional recipe, attributed to a 14<sup>th</sup> C monk in St. Albans, Bro. Thomas Rodcliffe, allowed for spices, currants and mixed peel to be added to the flour and yeast; however, the cross was a strip of plain pastry, baked into the top.



**HOT CROSS BUN PRAYERS** **As you stir the mixture:** Thank you Jesus that you came into the world and stirred things up so that people thought about what really mattered. **As you lay the cross on top of the bun:** Thank you Jesus for coming to save us by dying on a cross and taking the punishment for the bad things I do. **As they go in the oven:** Thank you that, although you were buried in a tomb, you rose three days later and you are still alive today. **As you eat a hot cross bun:** Thank you Lord Jesus for giving me all I need to live a life following you. Amen. Find the prayer and recipe at: <https://exeter.anglican.org/resources/lent-and-easter-resources-2021/hot-cross-bun-cards/>

Holy Saturday is a day of prayer and fasting, during which we meditate on the Lord's suffering, death and descent to the dead. The altar is bare and the door of the tabernacle is open to show it is empty. This mood is broken by the Easter Vigil, the only Mass which is celebrated on this day. This may be a day to join in the universal prayer of the Church by praying one or more parts of the Liturgy of the Hours. <https://universalis.com/> gives you the prayers and readings and is clearly laid out.

Some music you may enjoy in Holy Week: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuzHsp7eCF8>

Wishing you a blessed Holy Week,

Gillian