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Pontifical Good Friday Holy Land Collection

Palm Sunday: Do You Follow the Crowd or Follow Jesus?

The view from the Mount of Olives is amazing. The whole of Jerusalem is spread out before you. Walking from the top of the Mount of Olives recreating the Palm Sunday procession is one of the highlights of any pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

The route begins on the top of the Mount of Olives and winds down between stone walls. The way is narrow and steep and as you are descending you pass by the Church of Dominus Flevit, where Jesus wept for Jerusalem (Lk 19: 41) and the Russian Orthodox Convent of St. Mary Magdalene. Further down the road, you pass by a Jewish cemetery, where small rocks sit on top of the flat tombs. The custom is that visitors to the graves place a rock on a tomb as a witness – suddenly the passage in Luke that the stones will cry out makes



The Hosanna Way down the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem

Help For Holy Land Christians

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sense (cf. Lk 19:40). Finally, the path arrives at the Garden of Gethsemane and Basilica of the Agony, also known as the Church of All Nations, commemorating where Jesus began His Passion. So the physical geography follows the pattern of the Gospel for Palm or Passion Sunday – first, the triumphal entry to Jerusalem and then the agony in the Garden.

The two Gospel readings for Palm Sunday, the triumphal entry and the Passion, remind us of our human frailty. We are quick to join a crowd and follow along, whether that means shouting “Hosanna” or “Crucify him!” We witness the same thing today in Twitter mobs and social media – human beings in a group can be easily swayed. The tensions between cultures in present day Israel and Palestine are no different.

An act of oppression and aggression from one group often fuels a mob mentality that results in more acts of vengeance and violence from others. The cycle continues and is self-perpetuating. The Christians in the Holy Land, who are a small minority of the population, are often caught in the middle of this cycle of cruelty and persecution. They know all too well that being a follower of Christ means we must try to be faithful, not only in the good times when we are triumphant, but also when we suffer in our own weaknesses or are the victims of collective violence. In solidarity with our Christian brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, we can help ease the effects of this oppression and violence by giving generously to support their urgent needs through the Pontifical Good Friday Collection this week.