



# Franciscan Action Network

Transforming the World in the Spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare

P.O. Box 29053 • Washington, DC 20017 • 202-527-7575 • 1-888-364-3388 (toll free) • 202-527-7576 (fax)

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## **Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion: Journey with Christ**

### **Reflecting on the Readings**

At the Procession

*Gospel:* [Lk. 19:28-40](#)

At the Mass

*1<sup>st</sup> Reading:* [Is 50:4-7](#)

*Psalm:* [Ps 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24](#)

*2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:* [Phil 2:6-11](#)

*Gospel:* [Lk 22:14—23:56](#) or [23:1-49](#)

Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God, “the king who comes in the name of the Lord” (Lk. 19:38) walked upon this earth. Should we not treat it with the same reverence as those who spread their cloaks on the road before him? If we fail to live the truth of God’s sovereignty—not ours—in creation, “the stones will cry out!” (Lk. 19:40). As the earth strains under the burden of a changing climate and misuse of resources, we already hear creation crying out through natural disasters and the human voices of those experiencing environmental degradation.

As Christ suffered on the cross for sins he did not commit, our sins, those who suffer most from the degradation of creation often contribute least: the poor and vulnerable in the U.S. and developing countries, the unborn, and generations to come. When they cry out, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” (Ps. 22:2), do we answer, “You relied on the LORD—let him deliver you; if he loves you, let him rescue you” (22:9)? How can we respond as witnesses of God’s loving deliverance?

Isaiah recognizes service as the object of God’s gift to him of “a well-trained tongue” (Is. 50:4). His talent exists “that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them” (50:4). As we consider our own transportation choices, let us remember the weary and ask how we might help or harm them. How do we select our modes of transportation? The limits of our time and finances are relevant concerns. How can we also account for the limits of earth’s ability to absorb greenhouse gas emissions and the health and well-being of our fellow human persons?

Luke omits palm branches in his account of Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem to emphasize that Christ’s kingship was not of this world. Modeling Isaiah’s use of his verbal skills, Paul’s beautiful hymn in the letter to the Philippians reflects on Jesus’ humility. While the people acclaim him as king, Christ chooses a humble colt to enter the city of his passion and death. In our daily choices, we can conform ourselves to Christ’s sacrificial love rather than the world’s values. May we listen attentively as every created being proclaims the glory of God, and may our choices also preach the Gospel truth that Christ is Lord of every aspect of our lives.

## **PRAYER**

*In our lives of penance, we can pray Paul's message in the spirit of St. Francis:*

Though we are in the image and likeness of God,  
may we not regard God's sovereignty over the earth  
as something to be grasped.  
Rather, let us empty ourselves  
as brothers and sisters to all creatures,  
expressing God's life-giving love in human appearance.  
May we be humble in obedience  
to the point of dying to convenience.  
May our tongues confess and our actions proclaim that  
"Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (*Phil. 2:11*).  
Amen.

## **FASTING** from *transportation excesses*

There are many simple ways to reduce the impact of our transportation choices on creation. If we drive a car, we can make a committed effort to its responsible use by carpooling; we will nurture our relationships with family and friends in the process! We can plan errands to minimize frequency and distance of our trips. In purchasing or renting another vehicle, we can make high fuel efficiency a top priority by selecting the smallest size for our needs or saving our money for a hybrid or electric car. Since low tire pressure reduces mileage efficiency, we can make sure that our tires are always full.

As much as possible, we can walk or bike to local destinations. We can take advantage of mass transit options in our area and learn more about ways to improve these systems. We can reevaluate the pace of our lives and look for leisure and community in our own neighborhoods.

## **ALMSGIVING**

In the fall of 2009, St. Anthony Parish (<http://stanthony-sacramento.org/>) in Sacramento, CA had a campaign focused on environmental justice and climate change. The campaign coincided with Respect Life Month in October and focused on the earth as the "envelope of life." Through homilies, the sale of cloth bags, regular bulletin announcements and other opportunities, parishioners learned about faithful ways to care for creation. The parish also collectively took the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor (<http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/>).

In the middle of the campaign, the parish organized a Hike and Bike to Church Sunday. Announcements several weeks in advance explained the challenge. On the designated Sunday, more than a 100 parishioners either rode their bikes or walked to church. After each Mass, the pastor came out with holy water to bless the bikes and the soles of the shoes of those who walked.

The entire parish embraced the event, and the local NBC affiliate highlighted the story on the news that night. Since this experience of a practical way to reduce their collective carbon footprint, more parishioners now regularly walk or ride to church. Young people especially are more excited to go to Mass. More recently, 400 parishioners signed up for a legislative network that will allow them to express their commitment to caring for creation through advocacy.