

Palm Sunday

Most visual remembrances of Palm Sunday appeal to us two millennia later, with a literal sacred images, to stand beside the people cheering, waving palms, laying garments before Jesus to honor his kingship. Ironically, however, this Royal Person, calmly accepting the adulation is riding on a common beast of burden and asks of us the same -- only this: to live justly, to love tenderly and, as he is showing in his person, to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6)

This unusual triptych, a popular meditation arrangement from the Middle ages, offers a different experience through luminous paintings -- beyond just being observers -- and invites us into a further inner participation in the Mystery of the Incarnation itself. American artist Leszek Forczek layers many watercolors in a unique sense of luminosity, space and movement. Hidden and revealed among the many colored swaths is an invitation to join in the scriptural drama of Jesus' joyous entry into Jerusalem.

You may have to look longer to find Jesus riding a donkey in each panel, while men, women and children wave palms, sing and lay their coats before him in a tribute. Even angels overhead on the second painting join in the fluid streams of colors that seem to be singing with Him. Although outwardly transparent, this sacred drama echoes in a way the thought of St. Augustine as Visible signs of invisible grace.

Certainly the usually-invisible glory of Palm Sunday has never been expressed so spontaneously for us -- even though two millennia later, yet still, so vividly present. It is a dance in paint, a moment of grace.

