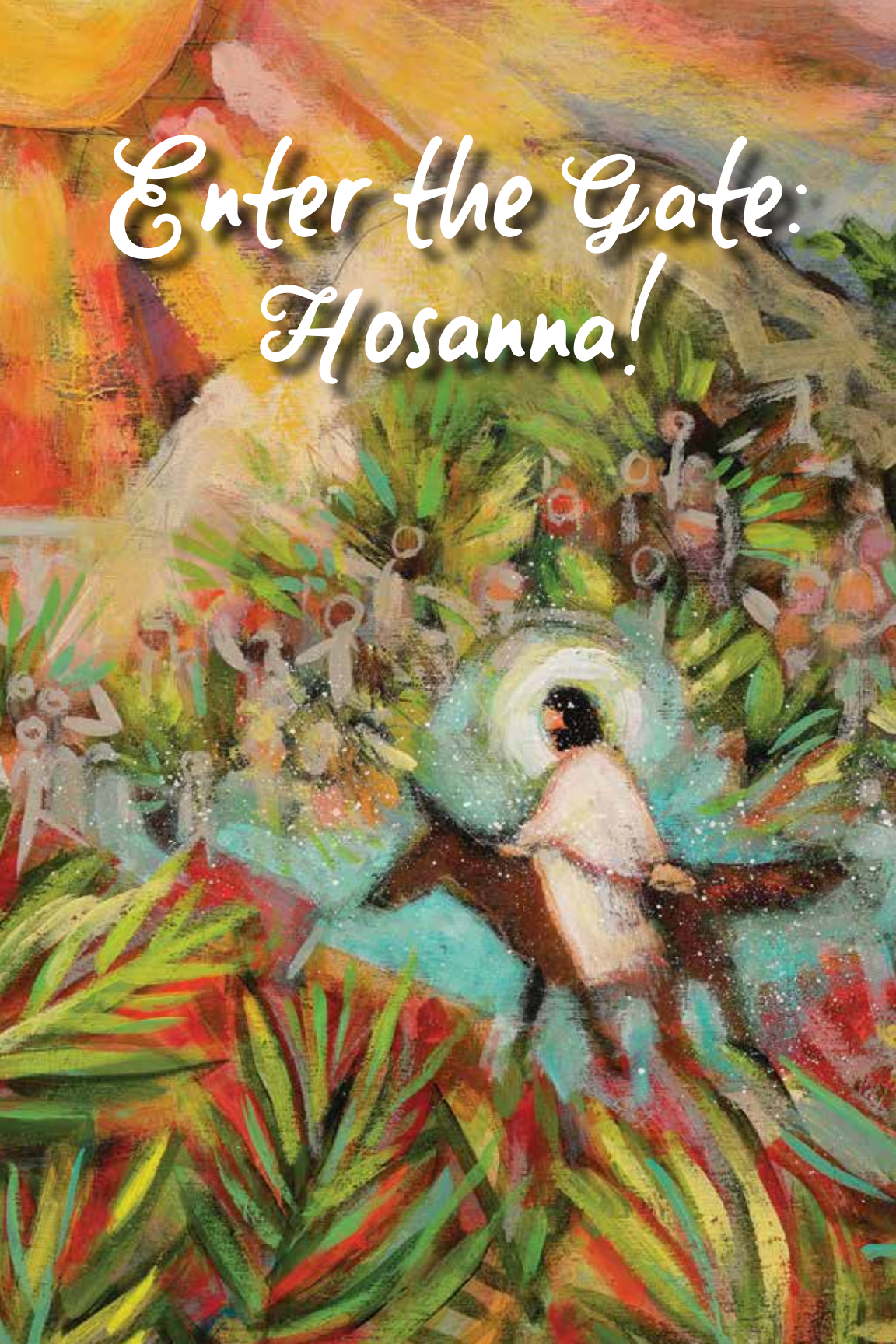


Enter the Gate:
Hosanna!



EXULT Greatly
O daughter ZION!
Shout for JOY, O
DAUGHTER JERUSALEM!

Behold:
your King is coming
to you
A just SAVIOR is he
humble & riding on
a Donkey, on a colt
the foal of a donkey.

ZECHARIAH 9:9

JN



A Scripture Reading

When they drew near Jerusalem and came to Bethpage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tethered, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them here to me. And if anyone should say anything to you, reply, ‘The master has need of them.’ Then he will send them at once.” . . . The disciples went and did as Jesus had ordered them. They brought the ass and the colt and laid their cloaks over them, and he sat upon them. The very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and strewed them on the road. The crowds preceding him and those following kept crying out and saying:

“Hosanna to the Son of David;
blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord;
hosanna in the highest.”

—*Matthew 21:1–3, 6–9*



A Moment to Reflect

During the week of the Passover festival, the human story of Jesus would reach its climax and resolution, in fulfillment of the scriptures. Before leaving their safe encampment for Jerusalem, Jesus gathered his disciples and warned them of the dangers ahead: he was about to come face-to-face with evil in the heart of the Holy City, and it was God's will that—at least for a time—the powers of destruction would win.

At first Peter balked, wanting to protect his precious friend and teacher. But Jesus rebuked him: "Get behind me, Satan! . . . You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do" (Mt 16:23).

One of Satan's best tricks is getting us to think that we are in control, that we can outthink God, that our own will should guide us. Jesus is directly confronting this lie as he lays forth the narrative of redemption. He is asking his closest disciples to walk *with* him, faithfully yoked to his Father's will.

Jerusalem would become the birthplace of a new kind of kingdom, not through might or political maneuvering, but through the shedding of innocent blood. And Jesus would enter this city of his new heritage in the same way his mother had carried him into Bethlehem, the place of his earthly father's origins: on a lowly beast of burden.

Upon Jesus' arrival, the crowds cheered and laid out a "red carpet" of cloaks and palm fronds. *What an exciting festival!* they must have thought. *Look! The powerful prophet Jesus is here to heal us!* And Jesus did come to heal—but not at all in the way they had imagined. By the end of the week, the people would see their acclaimed prophet crucified, dead, and buried. Faith would be shaken; allegiances would shift. Fear would take hold, and most would run away to escape this unexpected plan of healing and salvation they had celebrated such a short time before.

Jesus proceeds anyway, willingly offering himself as the ultimate sacrifice.

It's easy to see how the people didn't understand what was happening, and how they lost faith. They had no idea of how the story would end. We do, yet we can still find it hard to trust in God. We feel joyful and blessed when things go according to plan, but stumble and fall when they don't.

Like Peter, we must learn to walk with Christ, not ahead of him, as he lovingly forges our weaknesses into strengths, declaring us worthy despite ourselves. The depth of spirit we gain on our difficult roads assures us that the peace we attain in this life will not be taken from us in the next.



My Creative Illuminations

Before you proceed with this exercise, reread the gospel passage, taking note of the words and images that are particularly meaningful to you. You might choose to express these ideas creatively, using your favorite art supplies or a special notebook or journal. Once you have placed yourself in the story, take a few moments to reflect on the questions below.

“SURRENDER ALL” JOURNAL PROMPTS

Surrender to Jesus. Have I ever put my will before what I knew was right, as Peter did with Jesus? As I became self-aware of my behavior, what changes did I put in place so I wouldn't fall into the same trap again? What else did I learn from this experience?

Come to the silence. As I ponder the image of Jesus entering Jerusalem, what are my other senses telling me about what is going on in that moment? How does it sound, smell, and feel? In their jubilation, the crowd could not grasp what was

truly happening. What can I do to shut out the noise and excitement of the secular world to be able to hear God clearly?

Make my faith real. What ways did my own family practice their faith, and what memories do I have from my own childhood related to these practices that I would like to pass along to other members of my family and use to keep my own faith alive?

TURN UP THE LIGHT

Do you regularly welcome Jesus into your home, into your life? Begin a tradition of prayer and reflection with your family, or with a group of close friends. You might say the Rosary together, join or begin a prayer group, or even just examine your day together around the dinner table. Make a point to make this a regular part of your life.



Prayer for the Journey

Dear Jesus:

Help me trust you and walk in your understanding, not my own. When my head spins in worry over my hopes and fears, help me place my trust in you as loving Lord of my life. Let me walk with you, trusting you to set the pace as we take the steps together, one at a time. Help me not to rush ahead or insist on my own direction, but be open to your plan, which is far above my understanding. Protect my heart from questioning you as you lead me in your ways. *Amen.*



STATION 1

*Jesus Is
Condemned
to
Death*

Though Harshly
Treated He
& did not open
his Mouth;

Like a lamb led to
Slaughter
or a Sheep Silent
before Shearers



he did
not
Open
His mouth.

ISAIAH 53:7



A Scripture Reading

As soon as morning came, the chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

—Mark 15:1–5



A Moment to Reflect

Evil exists, and it is part of our human condition. Even with the best of intentions, our spines bend under the weight of fear, jealousy, shame, and pride. After the last Passover meal Jesus shares with his closest companions (see Lk 22:14–20), the story turns dark as the power of evil encroaches. Jesus is betrayed by a close friend, condemned by leaders of his own faith, and sentenced to death by a political opportunist. Giving in to mob mentality, the same crowd whose resounding Hosannas carried him into Jerusalem now publicly mock and condemn him. Jesus is utterly shunned and alone—heart-breakingly, soul-crushingly deserted.

Look back at the painting and see the splashes of red, which denote points of pain. In this station, Jesus is bound and powerless. The Lamb of God doesn't defend himself; he no longer heals, converts, or touches. The heavy, dark Cross walls off Jesus from the crowd, just as God's presence (in blue) seems to withdraw from him.

Note the flashes of red among the crowd as well. Some in that crowd knew he was innocent. Some were uncertain and didn't speak out. Many bystanders felt powerless against evil and condemned by their own fears. In condemning Jesus, in abandoning him to a cruel death, they also condemn themselves. And so do we.

It's so easy to believe that, in similar circumstances, we'd never condemn Jesus ourselves. But Jesus isn't just the compassionate teacher from the old TV miniseries. The real Jesus lives in us and among us. He's in the homeless, the immigrant, and the disabled. He is in the man who honors his wife, the woman who cares for her neighbor, the child who doesn't steal even when no one is looking. He is in the chaos of possibility and the order of discipline.

We all know the outcome of this story. It's so easy to want to jump ahead, to forget what this awful night was like. But to get to redemption, we must first confront and name the stone in our own hearts. We must take our place in this scene.



My Creative Illuminations

Before you proceed with this exercise, reread the gospel passage, taking note of the words and images that are particularly meaningful to you. Write or draw your impressions as you put yourself in the place of each character in the narrative. You might choose to express these ideas creatively, using your favorite art supplies or a special notebook or journal. Once you have placed yourself in the story, take a few moments to reflect on the questions below.

“SURRENDER ALL” JOURNAL PROMPTS

Can I surrender to injustice? Have I ever been unjustly condemned, like Jesus? Lied about, judged, shamed, or wrongly accused? How did I respond in those situations? Did I react or keep silent? If I had it to do over again, would I respond differently today?

Are my own hands clean? Have I ever “washed my hands” of responsibility, like Pilate, when I should have acted? Have I ever turned a deaf ear to the promptings of the Spirit, as Pilate turned from his wife’s urgent messages?