

The Church of the Damascus Road *Echo!*

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Fort Dodge & Rockwell City, IA

A Journey Through Holy Week to Easter

The most eventful week in history is sandwiched between two Sundays, Palm Sunday and Easter. From the Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday), Jesus moved unflinchingly through the week to his trial, crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection.

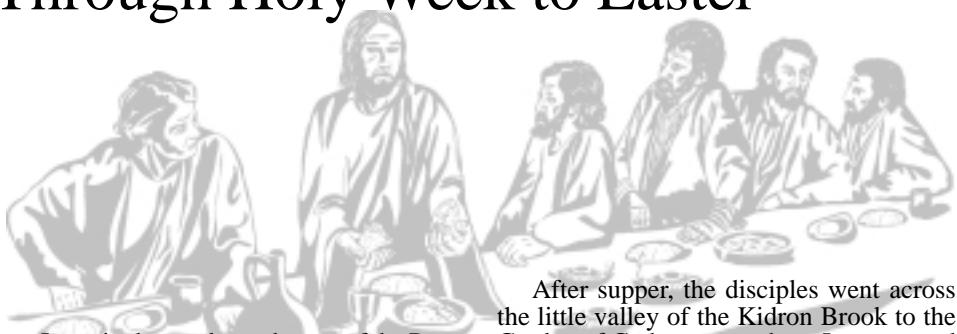


Procession of the Palms

The people who were gathering in Jerusalem for the Passover hailed Jesus as one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna! The same people yelled out "Crucify him!" a few days later. Jesus rode in on a donkey, the same way a conquering king would ride into the kingdom he conquered to indicate that he came in peace to accept the terms of surrender.



FOOT WASHING



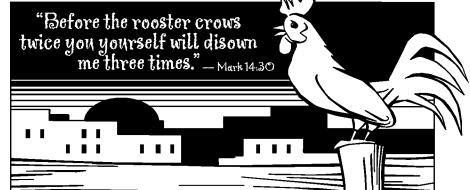
Later in the week, on the eve of the Passover, the Jewish High Holy Day, Jesus observed the Passover meal with his disciples on "the night he was betrayed." Before they began the meal, Jesus washed his disciples' feet (John 13:3-14). As Jesus prepared to wash his disciples' feet, Peter objected, but Jesus told him that unless he washes Peter's feet he can have no part in Jesus, so Peter said, "Lord! Not only my feet but wash me from head to toe!" Jesus assured him that washing his feet was enough. Then, when Jesus was done he told them that he, their master, has washed their feet, they should wash each other's feet.

Judas, for the price of a slave, thirty pieces of silver, had earlier agreed to identify Jesus to the Jewish leaders. Yet Judas was at the Passover, hoping that Jesus would spring into action and lead the Jews in revolt against Rome. Jesus did not, so Judas betrayed him. At the Passover meal Jesus indicated that it was Judas who would betray him, but the disciples missed the whole act and when Judas got up to carry out his betrayal, the disciples thought he was going after more food for the meal.

After supper, the disciples went across the little valley of the Kidron Brook to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed that God might find some other way to accomplish our salvation, but Jesus left it up to God's will. The disciples were having a hard time staying awake.

Then Judas arrived with a platoon of Temple soldiers to arrest Jesus, but the soldiers did not know which one was Jesus, so Judas had told them that the one he kissed was the one, so Judas betrayed him with a kiss. Then the soldiers arrested Jesus and took him to the High Priest's house for a mock trial.

During the trial at the High Priest's house, some people were in the courtyard warming themselves by a fire and Peter was there. One of the persons there said that he was one of the disciples, but Peter denied knowing Jesus. Two more times Peter denied Jesus and, just as Jesus had predicted during supper the night before, the rooster crowed. Peter realized what he had done and he wept bitterly.



Even though no two witnesses could agree on the charges against Jesus, they found him guilty and sentenced him to death. However, the Jewish authorities could not put him to death themselves, so they took Jesus to Pilate. Even though Pilate could find

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nothing that Jesus had done to deserve death, he washed his hands of the whole thing and handed him over to be crucified.

While Jesus was being nailed to a cross, he spoke to God saying, "Father forgive them, they don't know what they are doing!" When the soldiers had finished nailing Jesus to the cross and putting the cross up in place, they threw dice to decide who got which pieces of Jesus' clothing.

As Jesus hung on the cross he bore the sins of the whole world, every person's sin is washed clean by his dying. When Jesus had hung on the cross for several hours, he said, "It is finished" and he died. Nicodemus asked for



**By the Cross
her vigil keeping,
Stands the mournful
Mother weeping,
Near her Son
until the end +**

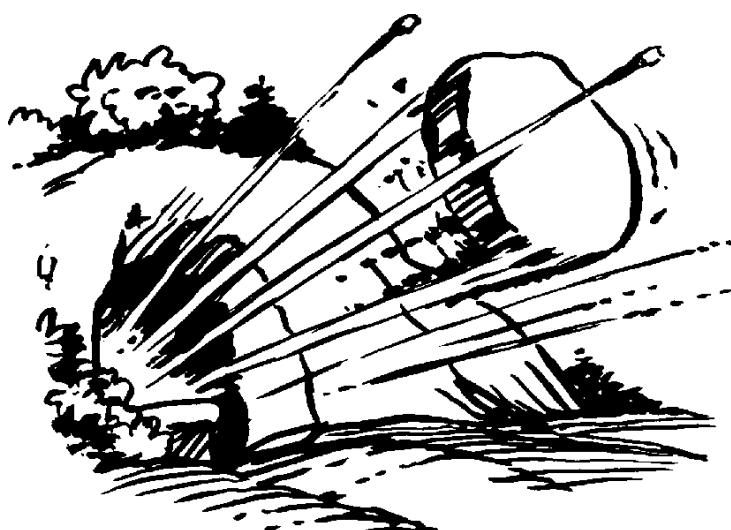
**christ became
obedient
for us unto
death,
even to death
on a CROSS**

Jesus's body and buried him in his own personal tomb, where Jesus lay for three days.

On Sunday morning some women went to the tomb to put spices on Jesus' body, they found the tomb empty and two angels asked them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" The women were astonished to realize that Jesus was alive again and they ran and told the disciples who did not believe the women until they had seen the empty tomb for themselves.

THE

RESURRECTION



Three Men

There were three men waiting to enter heaven. Before they were allowed to enter, St. Peter asked each man individually, "Tell me, what is the meaning of Easter?"

The first man said, "Uh, isn't Easter the holiday when all your family gets together to eat turkey and then you all watch football afterwards?" St. Peter shook his head. "No, no, no...that's not what Easter is."

So St. Peter walked over to the second man and asked, "Tell me, what is the meaning of Easter?"

The second man replied, "Easter is that holiday where you set up a tree and decorate it and that man in the funny red suit comes down the chimney and..." St. Peter cut him off. "No, no, no, that's not what Easter is either."

St. Peter was feeling very discouraged. Did anybody know what Easter was? He walked over to the third man and asked, "Tell me, what is the meaning of Easter."

The third man answered, "Easter is the holiday when Jesus was crucified and then they buried him in a tomb and he stayed there for three days, and on the third day..."

St. Peter interrupted him, "Stop, don't go any further...let me go get these other two men." St. Peter summoned the first two men to come and listen to the third man's definition of Easter. "Okay, start over again and tell these men the meaning of Easter."

The third man started again, "Easter is the holiday when Jesus was crucified and then they buried him in a tomb and he stayed there for three days..."

"Go on," said St. Peter.

"And then on the third day, Jesus rose from the tomb..."

"Yes. Yes." said St. Peter.

"And if he saw his shadow, it was six more weeks of Lent."

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The official publication of The Church of the Damascus Road, a Christian Community of Reconciliation, serving the inmate population of the medium security units at Rockwell City and Fort Dodge, Iowa.

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If you are reading a copy of this letter that is not yours, you can subscribe and receive your own copy by writing to:

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Dime Seventy

Guilty as charged? No denying.
 Mercy from the judge? No use trying.
 I said, "I'm good!"
 She thought I was lying.
 So now I sit in my cell, writing and crying.
 My first offense, not one before.
 And this one involved not a drop of gore.
 Yet, I sit in my cell,
 Writing poem number four.
 With seven years to write,
 'Til my fingers are sore.
 And cry, 'til I have no tears anymore.
 —David Boje 2004

Coat of arms

Coats of armor or,
 coats of death.
 It must be life,
 because of their breath.
 Motionless in the dirt,
 left to die, left alone.
 Will never see family or home.
 Coats have run,
 for fear of death.
 Did not stay,
 to help the rest.
 Can not help,
 can not stay.
 Must run for safety,
 to live another day.
 Victory is not ours,
 it will never be.
 Regret in our hearts,
 until eternity.
by Albert Cooper

ABC's for Christians

A-Act instead of argue
 B-Build instead of brag
 C-Climb instead of criticize
 D-Dig instead of depreciate
 E-Encourage instead of envy
 F-Forgive instead of forsake
 G-Give instead of grumble
 H-Help instead of harm
 I-Invite instead of ignore
 J-Join instead of jeer
 K-Kneel instead of Kick
 L-Love instead of lampoon
 M-Move instead of mold
 N-Nurture instead of neglect
 O-Obey instead of object
 P-Pray instead of pout
 Q-Qualify instead of quit
 R-Rescue instead of ridicule
 S-Shout instead of shrink
 T-Try instead of tremble
 U-Undergird instead of undermine
 V-Vindicate instead of Vilify
 W-Witness instead of wilt
 X-Xterminate instead of Excuse
 Y-Yield instead of yell
 Z-Zip instead of zigzag



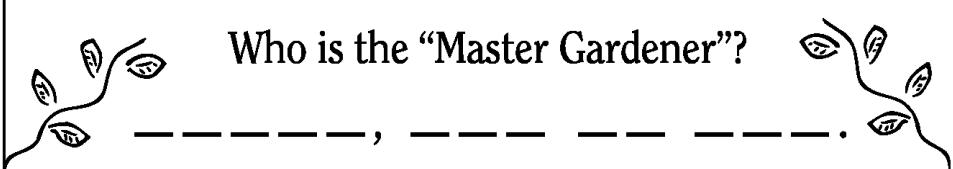
"A Time to Plant..."

The spring of the year is time to plant gardens or tend to other plants. The list below contains the names of plants that grew in Bible times. How many do you recognize? Circle the names from the list. They may be found → ← ↓ ↑ ↘ . There will be 13 letters uncircled. Write them in the spaces below.

myrrh	aloes	cassia	mint	dill
lentil	apple trees	crocus	barley	cucumbers
balsam trees	melons	leeks	onions	garlic
oak trees	wheat	figs	mustard	grain
pomegranates	olive trees	beans	millet	cane
almonds	cinnamon	pistachio nuts	rose of Sharon	
lily of the valley				

P	L	E	N	T	I	L	M	C	C	J	E	B	S	U
I	O	G	R	A	I	N	I	I	U	B	E	A	N	S
S	A	M	I	N	T	E	L	N	C	D	A	L	S	S
T	P	Y	E	S	B	N	L	N	U	R	L	S	S	C
A	P	R	M	G	A	A	E	A	M	A	M	A	E	O
C	L	R	E	A	R	C	T	M	B	T	O	M	E	R
H	E	H	L	R	L	A	L	O	E	S	N	T	R	C
I	T	S	O	L	E	S	N	N	R	U	D	R	T	O
O	R	N	N	I	Y	S	N	A	S	M	S	E	E	F
N	E	O	S	C	D	I	L	L	T	O	F	E	V	I
N	U	E	I	W	H	E	A	T	L	E	E	K	S	I
T	S	N	G	O	A	K	T	R	E	E	S	O	L	S
S	R	O	S	E	O	F	S	H	A	R	O	N	O	D
L	I	L	Y	O	F	T	H	E	V	A	L	L	E	Y

Who is the "Master Gardener"?



Kids, Drugs, and Crime

Not long ago I went to visit a prison as part of Operation Starting Line, an effort to bring the saving message of Jesus Christ to every prisoner in America. After the program, I walked the cell blocks, one-by-one, talking with inmates. Some of them responded positively, shaking my hand and thanking me for being there. But some of the men did not even get out of their bunks. It was mid-day. At first, I thought they were sleeping, but then I was told, "They're not sleeping. They're stoned on drugs."

I was surprised at the casual attitude toward drug use. But as I left the prison, I realized that there is little hope for these guys. Very few have access to drug treatment programs. Kids come out in even worse shape than when they came in. Seventy percent will end up committing new crimes.

When are we going to wake up to this problem-and do something about it?

One person who has come up with solid solutions is Joseph Califano, former secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. Twelve years ago Califano founded CASA, the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse. CASA has just released a report of a five-year study of the nation's juvenile justice systems. Its findings are as sad as they are shocking.

Four of every five child and teen arrestees are involved with drugs. Many are under the influence of alcohol or drugs when committing their crimes, which often involve drugs and alcohol.

What is America doing about this? Almost nothing. CASA found that less than 4 percent of juvenile arrestees receive any

treatment for substance abuse. Perhaps worst of all is the lack of faith-based programs. CASA has long known that religious commitment can help aid in recovery. Yet, CASA did not find a single program that provides for the spiritual enrichment of incarcerated kids. As Califano says, "Instead of helping, we are writing off these young Americans."

He's right. Even if we are not motivated by concern for troubled kids, we ought to consider the high cost of ignoring them. CASA found that if we could prevent the crimes and imprisonment of just 12 percent of juvenile lawbreakers, we would have 60,000 fewer adult inmates.

That's why I join Joe Califano in calling for an overhaul of our juvenile justice system. It's time for the states to change the way we handle juvenile offenders.

The CASA report provides a tremendous apologetic opportunity as well. It documents what happens when somebody comes to Christ: He is transformed. Califano once said he was amazed to find that nearly every ex-drug addict he met cited religion as a key to rehabilitation. That shouldn't surprise Christians: People use drugs and alcohol to fill an inner void that God alone can fill.

So while we certainly need to upgrade the inadequate juvenile justice system, the Church must also get involved in helping set free people held captive to drugs and alcohol. We do it by helping them fill the spiritual void in their hearts with the living God.

BreakPoint with Charles Colson, Commentary #041112 - 11/12/2004 Note: This commentary was delivered by Prison Fellowship President Mark Earley.



The Poem

I knelt to pray but not for long,
I had too much to do.
I had to hurry and get to work
for bills would soon be due.
So I knelt and said a hurried prayer,
and jumped up off my knees.
My Christian duty was now done
my soul could rest at ease.
All day long I had no time
to spread a word of cheer.
No time to speak of Christ to friends,
they'd laugh at me I'd fear.
No time, no time, too much to do,
That was my constant cry,
No time to give to souls in need
But at last the time, the time to die.
I went before the Lord,
I came, and I stood with downcast eyes.
For in his hands God held a book;
it was the book of life.
God looked into his book and said,
"Your name I cannot find.
I once was going to write it down...
But never found the time."

Ever Thought about This?

It's always too soon to quit! No matter how dark things look. No matter how insoluble the problem, how impossible, how imponderable... despair is never justified. Because to despair of self is really to despair of God! It is to count God incapable, to measure God by human standards, to ignore the clear Word of God. Nothing is too hard for God! With him all things are possible! This is a truth men have tested and tried again and again to their satisfaction. Not once has God failed to help the man who called on him for help. Not once have his promises been found wanting.

—Dr. Richard Halverson

This Day's Thought

God really promises, "Do not fear, for I am with you." But it can be nearly impossible for a hurting person to believe this until someone comes alongside to "make God visible."

—Dave Biebel

Taking Risks

If we need to have all our bases covered before we move into action, then nothing exciting ever happens, but if we dare to take a few crazy risks because God asks us to do so, many doors that we didn't even know existed open before us. —Henri Nouwen

Artwork & Articles invited

The editor of this newsletter is inviting **ALL READERS** to contribute articles, poetry, art work, and opinions for the newsletter. So don't be bashful.

Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge

7:00pm Wednesdays Holy Communion
6:30pm Fridays Prayer Team
7:00pm Fridays Bible Study

NCCF Rockwell City

6:30pm Tuesdays Prayer & Bible Study
6:30pm Thursdays Holy Communion

