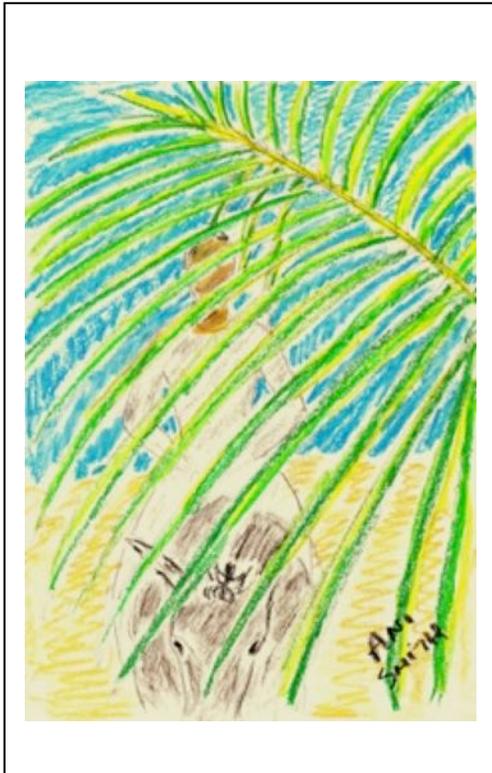




Alan  
Smith

**RIDE ON,  
RIDE ON IN MAJESTY**



Today, Palm branches waved as they were carried down the aisles of churches around the world.

Passion Sunday – or Palm Sunday as we know it - marks the day of celebration when Jesus, riding on a donkey, made his way into Jerusalem for the upcoming Jewish festival of Passover.

His followers had tried to persuade him not to go to the Holy City. His life was in danger, but Jesus went although he knew the time had come for him to die. He had preached love and forgiveness during his brief three years of travelling the countryside; some people's health was restored – some through faith, and others by a Jesus they did not know. He talked to men and women along the Way and brought them the news of a loving God. A God who loved them whatever their lives were or had been. Jesus blessed them with something they had never known love and forgiveness.

The following days of Holy Week are a downhill journey. We know, as did Jesus know, how the days would unfurl. I suppose his disciples, while they knew that Jesus was in danger in Jerusalem, just didn't understand the gravity of the charges Jesus would face - the torture and agony he was going to suffer as he died on a cross, their world would change forever. Not just their world, but the worlds ever since. They just didn't understand the warnings Jesus had given them when he talked about leaving them. I can't help sympathizing with them – they just didn't understand. Sometimes, I don't either.



## WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDOUS CROSS

Our Holy Week this year suffered a major news disaster. The Medieval Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris was nearly gutted by a raging fire. It happened so quickly as it engulfed the 850 year old building. Thousands of spectators gathered in the city to watch the raging flames and were overwhelmed by the scene. The response was world-wide. The Cathedral, so well-known, is to be restored – or rebuilt. Many of the treasures were saved including the beautiful cross on the high altar.

The fire made me stop and think about the events that had taken place there throughout its history. I pictured the millions of people who have been in that sanctuary: people who have been there for worship services: personal celebrations- baptisms, marriages, funerals, broken hearts; millions of visitors who have walked the paving stones to gaze at the wonder of the architecture, the paintings, statues and tablets that recount peoples' names as well as historic events that have taken place within its walls. Others who have just sat quietly in a pew; perhaps they have knelt, rosaries in their hands, and prayed to God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and Mary, the Mother of Christ in this spiritual place. Barely a few weeks earlier, my friend had a picture taken holding his six month-old grandson on a seat outside the Cathedral. Now barricades are there to keep visitors away.





THURSDAY. Jesus and his disciples came together to partake in the Passover meal. Visually portrayed it is the Last Supper. For Christians? it became the spiritual celebration of the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion, Eucharist) Jesus took, a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it and gave it to them saying, 'This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' Then, he poured the wine and passed it to them all: 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.'



*Anger*  
*Meanness*  
*Cruelty*  
*Abuse*  
*Temper*  
*Criticism*  
*Gossip*  
*Falsehoods*  
*Bullying*

TODAY, Good Friday is the epitome of a sorrow-filled day. It played out as Jesus had anticipated when he rode into Jerusalem. Did he know about his appearances and charges before Caiaphas and Pilate; the flogging, the crown of thorns upon his head, the purple robe? He knew that he would be betrayed by Judas, that he would be denied by Peter, and deserted by all his disciples as they fled fearful for their own lives. He never could have known, however, just what his human, agonizing death on the cross would be.

"My God, my God. Why have you forsaken me"?

Jesus often spoke about the destruction of the Temple and how it would be resurrected within three days. Those who heard these words were disbelieving. How could this landmark Temple that, at that time, had taken 46 years to build, be destroyed and rebuilt in three days? *Foolish words.* They did not understand what he was telling them: That his presence among him was the Temple; after death he would be resurrected.

*In my scale of sorrows, I placed some of the griefs for which we may pray and ask for the promised forgiveness. Perhaps you may add others.*

**O SACRED HEAD, SORE WOUNDED**



12:00 NOON TO 3:00 P.M.



Joy, in all ways:

All newborn creatures

Natures' Springtime

First time love

Beauty's art forms:

music, art, dance

First fresh snowfall

The night sky

Lakeside summer day

The other side of Good Friday that lifts us out of the tragedy is our knowledge that two days later we may rejoice upon Easter Sunday, the day of the Resurrection.

Early that morning, Mary Magdalene, another Mary, and Salome, women who had stood at the foot of the Cross when Jesus was crucified, went to the tomb with spices to anoint his body. The faithful few discovered that their savior, Mary's son, wasn't there. He is not in the tomb. The women who stood with him while he hung on the cross, and died, had lost him again. Or so it seemed at first.

But we know the next part of the history. Christ had risen and appeared before them. They were probably too overwhelmed by the cruelty, crucifixion, death, and burial to be able to comprehend all of this. Mary Magdalene encountered Him in the garden though she didn't recognize him until he called her name: 'Mary.'

'Don't touch me.' Those words possibly denied her first instinct – to embrace her Lord and Redeemer.

So the other side of the set of scales is filled with more joyous gifts that we have received and enjoyed throughout our lives. Many of us are so blessed. Many amongst us are not and they are the ones for whom we must weep and do what little we may to be there for them.

So the scales are symbols of the griefs we experience, and the joys that outweigh them.

And, more significantly, the Notre Dame photograph was taken the morning after the fire. Is it not a wonderful picture of the eternity of God, at the forefront of the picture, all the rubble caused by the fire? On the wall, the gold cross hanging – apparently undamaged, with the statue of Mary beneath holding the limp body of her son carved in marble.

(You may wish to add your own sorrows or gifts of joy)