LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH GARNER, NC 3/25/18

“What If”

In the name…

Let us pray…

Have you noticed something? The gospel of Mark has no telling of Jesus entering Jerusalem. What if that did not happen? We would go right to Maundy Thursdoy, Jesus has His Last Supper and prays in Gethsemane or maybe in John washes the disciples feet. Then He is whipped on Friday. Art in Bloom at the Museum of Art in Raleigh has the lashing of Jesus as one of the works that is depicted in flowers. The flowers give a different perspective on His suffering. A kind of beauty to it and indeed it is for out of such suffering and yes even death by crucifixion which we would observe in a non Palm Sunday Holy Week. No need to worry the Church has not been fooling us.

The other gospels do tell of Jesus entering into Jerusalem, and so we did include it at our beginning as we processed in to the sanctuary today. However, if you looked at all three tellings of His entrance, it was impressive, He was a rock star. The crowd shouted praise and hosannas. So here is another “what/If”. What if the crowds took what He could do seriously, what if they did not turn against Him, what if He truly was the Messiah that was foretold by the prophets of old Who would turn things around? What is the Word of the Presence of the Messiah in Jerusalem travelled across the world and God’s Kingdom really did come to earth? He would have suffered, He would not have died. And subsequent generations, US, all knees would bow before Him every Sabbath. You are all probably wondering if I ingested too much sugar from the candy at the Egg Hunt yesterday. Too much you are thinking. But just What If?

Last week I mentioned the suffragist ladies who organized this big parade in Washington to get the vote. What if that parade was so successful that they got the vote immediately and did not have to be persecuted by their government. What if the March for Life today In Washington has the response that leaders worldwide will make it so that all citizens of the world will be safe so that school children will be safe and teachers do not have to take bullets for their students. And people who work and shop in a supermarket in France can feel safe and there will be no need for Arnaud Beltrame a French police officer to take the place of a hostage and so doing sacrifice his own life.

Anyhow, the 1913 parade or yesterday’s march would not have been needed if all that was needed 200 years ago I Jerusalem was for Jesus to ride in and everyone follow him and peace and harmony would prevail. We know that did not happen and nothing like that is happening now.

People are still turning on one another, missing entirely Jesus’ command to love one another as we love ourselves. And the crowds turned on Jesus. So it did not end with His entrance into Jerusalem. But it ended with His suffering and death on the cross. At least that is what the religious leaders and government authorities thought. We know it continues. Jesus rose from the grave and lives and gives us the assurance of life forever with Him and His Father in heaven but also new life here and now.

Another art piece that was the basis for a floral piece in Art in Bloom was the Assumption of Mary. The text describing the painting says this in not in any canon but was in the Golden Legend from the 13th Century. It says that after Mary died she was in the tomb 3 days and on the third day the apostles were gathered around and she was assumed into heaven surrounded by angels. Now you are sure I have had too much sugar. But what if? The assumption of Mary is not salvific, that is what we believe will happen to us because of God’s promise to us that is canonical, “His Son gave us eternal life” Because of that we can use our lives here and now to work for the peace and harmony that should have come with Jesus Entry into Jerusalem that should have come with the 1913 women’s parade that we hope will come as a result of the March for Life just held yesterday. So we raise our palms and shout our hosannas to our Lord Who leads the parade.

In the name…