**Contemplative Service for Wednesday**

**March 20, 2024**



*Giotto, detail from “Entry into Jerusalem,” 1305*

**First reading:** Job 14:7

For there is hope for a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its shoots will not cease.

**Music:** Johan Sebastian Bach, “Dona Nobis Pacem” performed by True Concord Voices & Orchestra

https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=youtube+bach+dona+nobis+pacem#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:ae9254fa,vid:4XjeZMVKZfw,st:0

**Second reading:** by Henry Morris

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: they shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon” (Psalm 92:12).

Believers are often likened to trees in Scripture: “That one shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth fruit in his season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever that one does shall prosper” (Psalm 1:3). “I am like a green olive tree in the house of God” (Psalm 52:8). “Your branches shall spread, and your beauty shall be as the olive tree, and your scent as Lebanon” (Hosea 14:16).

The palm-tree figure is especially intriguing. In the Bible, the palm is always the date palm, stately and beautiful. It has extremely deep tap roots—called a root ball—and thus can flourish even in the desert, growing tall and living long. It is perhaps the most useful of all trees, not only producing dates, but also sugar, wine, honey, oil, resin, rope, thread, tannin, and dyestuff. Its seeds are fed to cattle and its leaves are used for roofs, fences, mats, and baskets. Its fruit is said to get sweeter as the tree grows older, and this is compared to the believer in a beautiful verse: “Those that be planted in the house of God shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing” (Psalm 92:13,14).

**Music**: “Satyagraha” by Philip Glass, performed by Michael Mizrahi

https://www.google.com/search?q=youtube+philip+glass+satyagraha&client=firefox-b-1-d&sca\_esv=1146a47570834aa6&sxsrf=ACQVn09lZNKI4Yc5h2IwVrVShMKeUsmrGQ%3A1710723866802&ei=GpP3ZbjJMLuJ0PEP-9-X2A8&oq=youtube+philip+glass%2C+sat&gs\_lp=Egxnd3Mtd2l6LXNlcnAiGXlvdXR1YmUgcGhpbGlwIGdsYXNzLCBzYXQqAggAMgYQABgWGB5I8V9QyQxYj1JwAXgAkAEAmAHIAaAB6xuqAQYzMy40LjG4AQHIAQD4AQGYAiGgAtoXwgIHEAAYHhiwA8ICCRAAGAgYHhiwA8ICDhAAGIAEGIoFGIYDGLADwgIEECMYJ8ICCxAAGIAEGIoFGIYDwgIFEAAYgATCAgsQABiABBiKBRiRAsICChAAGIAEGBQYhwLCAggQABiABBixA8ICCxAAGIAEGLEDGIMBwgIKECMYgAQYigUYJ8ICDhAAGIAEGIoFGJECGLEDwgIREAAYgAQYigUYkQIYsQMYgwHCAgUQLhiABMICChAuGIAEGBQYhwKYAwCIBgGQBgiSBwQyNC45oAeA9gE&sclient=gws-wiz-serp#fpstate=ive&ip=1&vld=cid:48ebc662,vid:-UmLPXFhPKI,st:0

**Time of Silent Contemplation**

*This blessing  
can be heard coming  
from a long way off.*

*This blessing  
is making  
its steady way  
up the road  
toward you.*

*This blessing  
blooms in the throats  
of women,  
springs from the hearts  
of men,  
tumbles out of the mouths  
of children.*

*This blessing  
is stitched into  
the seams  
of the cloaks  
that line the road,  
etched into  
the branches  
that trace the path,  
echoes in  
the breathing  
of the willing colt,  
the click  
of the donkey’s hoof  
against the stones.*

*Something is rising  
beneath this blessing.  
Something will try  
to drown it out.*

*But this blessing  
cannot be turned back,  
cannot be made  
to still its voice,  
cannot cease  
to sing its praise  
of the One who comes  
along the way  
it makes.*

*—Jan Richardson*

**Communal Blessing**

Holy Life, like the tree, we live in seasons. Sometimes we can offer the gift of shade, shelter, or fruit. And there are times when we are stripped bare, aching in cold.

We seem unable to move, held by earth and climate. Yet you teach us to follow you up into light and deep into the richness of the soil. This invisible teaching, the continual movement of your grace, makes us supple and green. Thank you that we rise with you. Thank you that we sink ever more deeply into you. Amen.

**Music:** “I Want Jesus to Walk With Me”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAMfubLnyzE