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In the name of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Jesus of Nazareth rode into Jerusalem, the center of Jewish life in Israel, to challenge the powers of his religious and political world. He rode in alone - defenseless and vulnerable. He was not surrounded by soldiers, not shielded by swords and plates of armor. He rode in on a simple, unadorned, domestic donkey. He rode in surrounded by similarly defenseless and vulnerable people; protected only by the sheer numbers of them; protected only by their devotion to him.

The people in power were unimpressed by Jesus' message of inclusion and love of neighbor. They were not convinced of his divine authority. And yet they feared him. The Roman government hoped to maintain the peace and they feared the reaction of the masses if they took a beloved leader out; especially a beloved leader who had done nothing wrong. The religious leaders were at wits end to figure Jesus out. Jesus challenged their adherence to what they knew as Moses' law that was a set of laws that had been expanded over the centuries in what they thought were consistent and reverent ways. Jesus had seen some of those laws as inconsistent with God's love of all people, all creation and God's dream for justice.

The Hebrew nation's social structure had evolved over the years into one that was thoroughly steeped in a system based on notions of honor and shame. People who were perceived as honorable were celebrated with parades and accolades. Jesus won those as he rode into Jerusalem that day. The crowds waved palms and blanketed the donkeys path with them and with their garments. Jesus was treated like royalty as he entered. When he left the city during that Passover gathering he left in shame

bearing a cross that identified him as condemned. The Hebrew people glorified those who deserved honor. They abandoned the people who brought shame upon themselves and everyone who associated with them.

Even though or maybe because people are imperfect and prone to sin, God chose to reveal his true self to human beings by becoming one. *How* that happened is a mystery. *That* it happened is the mystery we gather around. We know our triune God is real because we experience God's presence here in this space, we experience Christ's presence in the Eucharist, and we experience the power of the Holy Spirit as we engage in the world on behalf of our neighbor and on behalf of justice. We see evidence of God in action in our world every single day, if we take the time to reflect.

Yesterday I watched the March for Our Lives Rally on C-SPAN. I have been deeply affected by this movement. Since I became a student of scripture, I have observed how throughout our Bible, in both Old and New Testaments, God reveals his message and acts in our world through the most unlikely of characters. He chose Abraham and Sarah, an old man with an old and barren wife, to be the father of a nation of God believers. He chose Moses, who suffered from an inability to speak well, to lead enslaved Hebrews out of Egypt into freedom. He chose Jacob, the mischievous, conniving twin to wrestle with and transform into the father of the twelve tribes of Judaism. He chose Mary, a teenaged girl from a small town in Israel to bear him into the world. And he chose Paul, the violent but passionate adherent of Jewish law, to bring the church into its early stages of being. God speaks to us from some unlikely sources.

Now, I am persuaded that God is speaking to us through the young people of this country. The adults who lead this country politically have become immersed in a system that is centered on ego, pride, material success and profit giving character, integrity and justice a back seat. They seem to have strayed from a God-centered ethos. The students of public school who inspired and are leading this movement are intelligent, articulate, passionate and determined. They defy the popular sentiment that our public schools are failing.

In Paul's letter to the Philippians who beseeches the church, that is all of us, to let the mind of Christ Jesus be in us. It is my observation that the mind of Christ was expressed through the voices I heard from those young people yesterday. Their words unite, and not divide. They are respectful. They are persuasive. They are prophets. They give me enormous hope for our future.

Jesus rode in on a donkey to challenge the powers that be. These young people walked in. They did not come in limos with blacked out windows surrounded by bodyguards. They boldly stuck to their message and said what they meant... like Jesus. They spoke out for life... like Jesus. They came together from all over the place. Jesus calls us to come together from all over the place in his name to further the kingdom.

At the end of his life, Jesus' followers abandoned him in shame. They went away to hide. Will we abandon these young people? I hope not. Jesus **poured out** his *life* and his *spirit* so that we could share in them. As we gather around the Lord's table today, may we wholly and truly inwardly digest all that God has given us through his

son Jesus Christ. May we by God's grace be the human generation who ushers in an era of justice that looks like the kingdom of God.