

Seated on a Donkey's Colt

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Palm Sunday

3-28-21

Isaiah 50: 4- 9(a) Phil. 2: 5-11 John 12: 12-16

Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29

Summary: I can be calm amid chaos if I carry Jesus with me.

Today, as we celebrate Palm Sunday, I would like to share with you one of my favorite miracles, one often overlooked. As you have probably guessed, this involves the familiar scene of Jesus riding into Jerusalem seated on a donkey's colt. One of my Junior sermons deals with this very theme and is from my Seasons of Faith book as a sequel to another story in my Friendly Beasts tales.

Miguel's First Rider

A young donkey named Miguel was tied, alongside his mother, to a tree near his owner's farm. Suddenly, two of Jesus' disciples came by and started untying them." Momma," Miguel brayed, "what are they doing?"

The disciples did not understand, of course, but some farmhands asked the same question. James, one of the disciples, said: "The Master has need of them."

“Momma,” Miguel asked as they were led to Jesus, “who is this ‘Master’ person?”

Evangeline, Miguel’s mother, replied: “Most humans like to think of themselves as masters of animals, but they can be cruel or neglectful. This is Jesus, a Master of Animals, and men. He is never cruel, and He knows how to love.”

“How do you know about him?” Miguel asked.

“When I was young, I carried his mother to Bethlehem and saw him born in a feed box. Later, I took him and his family to Egypt when a fearful king was trying to kill him. Later, we returned to Nazareth, but Mary had to sell me when her husband, Joseph, died. You are now old enough and strong enough to carry Jesus yourself,”

Frightened, Miguel brayed, “I’m strong, but no one has ridden me yet. What if I get frightened and buck?” Evangeline just smiled and told him to wait till he met Jesus.”

Sure enough, Jesus came over when they arrived. After his disciples left them alone, He said; “Hello, Evangeline. I remember kisses from your velvety nose when I was a baby. This must be your son. “

“Yes, this is Miguel,” she replied.

“Miguel. I will ride you into Jerusalem, a crowded city, today. People will throw their coats under your hooves, wave palm branches, and shout for joy as if they were an army of crazy people. I’ll depend on you to take me to the Temple safely.”

Amazed, Miguel brayed: “You can understand us?”

“Yes, but my disciples have too much to try to understand now. This will be our secret.”

Once Jesus mounted, Miguel felt safe. The chaos did not matter. Even a fire, earthquake, or end of the world could be faced so long as he carried Jesus with him. They arrived safely and Jesus dismounted to weep for us beside the Temple.

“Look!” someone shouted. “Doesn’t that donkey have an odd marking on its back?”

Before this ride, donkeys had been a solid, brown shade. Now, Miguel and all other donkeys would have a dark line down their backs and across their shoulders, looking like a cross.

Later, after He had died on a Cross like this marking, Miguel asked his mother, now marked as he was, what it all meant.

“He was a king born in a stable to die in a junk yard,” she replied. “Most kings use their power for themselves, but Jesus gave up everything to love, teach, and heal.”

“I wish I could do more for Him,” Miguel said.

“We can bear our burdens with courage, patience, and joy,” Evangeline said. “And there is one other thing about our new crossing manes.”

“What is that?”

She smiled, a miracle no human saw, looked up into the night sky and sighed. “A Cross,” she replied, “looks very much like a Star.”

This is one of those sermons which I think God is preaching to me as well as you. One of the constant characteristics of life, from the time of the caves on, has been chaos. There is a lot in all our lives to distract and frighten us. The miracle of the little donkey who carried Jesus through the shouting crowds of Palm Sunday reminds me that I can be calm so long as I carry Jesus with me.

This simple thought is what God gave me to share with you. I am tempted to expand on this or make erudite cross references among the lectionary readings. However, my homiletics teacher in Seminary, Rev. Dr. Walter Cook said: “When you get water, stop pumping.” So, carry Jesus with you, today and always. You can pass through anything that way and still be with Him. Amen.