On Palm Sunday, we gather as a Church to celebrate Jesus’ coming into Jerusalem and hear the story of his passion and death. Each Gospel writer tells the story a little differently. Each one lifts up different faces and characters, and through their eyes we watch what unfolds.

Luke’s Gospel is the only one that mentions the women who followed Jesus from Galilee (23:55–56). We know nothing about these women other than where they came from, but two things stand out: These women temporarily set aside their Passover preparations to care for a man who had been publicly condemned as a criminal, and they were willing to look their beloved Jesus’ death full in the face. They watched while Joseph of Arimathea lay him in the tomb and made sure that Jesus would be cared for even in death. They saw where he was buried and laid out and then went to prepare the spices and oils that would anoint his body and honor it.

Today, these women are examples of the countless anonymous disciples who quietly challenge culture and politics to follow the Lord’s call. We rarely notice them, even now, but they are in our churches and our neighborhoods, willing to do what needs to be done, even if it means suffering, sacrificing, or looking rejection and death in the face. As we enter Holy Week, these people just might be the companions we need.

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A Word From Pope Francis

“This week it would benefit all of us to look at the crucifix, to kiss the wounds of Jesus, to kiss them on the crucifix. He took upon himself all human suffering, he clothed himself in this suffering... Let us kiss the crucifix and say: for my sake, thank you Jesus, for me.”

General Audience,
April 16, 2014