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 Saint Mary's Episcopal Church, Newton
 Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday: Primary Text: Matthew 27:
 29 March 2026

Once there was a little boy who woke up one morning with gum in his hair.
 As he gets out of bed, he trips on his skateboard.
 When he's in the bathroom, his sweater falls in the sink.
 At breakfast, the boy's brothers have prizes in their cereal,
 while he only gets boring food.
 The boy has a day, a day full of painful cavities,
 unsympathetic teachers,
 boring shoes,
 icky lima beans,
 too soapy baths,
 & hated pajamas.

Yes, Alexander did indeed have a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.
 The Passion narratives all recount what could also legitimately be called
 Jesus and the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.
 In the last day of Jesus' life, things get worse and worse
 In a way that might be comical if someone's life wasn't at stake.

The disciples are all sleeping when Jesus is incredibly upset and needs support .
 Jesus is betrayed by a kiss from one of his disciples, Judas,
 who quite literally sold him out, a decision Judas regrets so quickly,
 he dies by suicide mere hours later, a detail only Matthew includes.
 Jesus' closest disciple, Peter, claims not to know who Jesus is,
 not once, not twice, but three times.
 Pilate, who could set Jesus free, Pilate,
 chooses what is easiest for himself
 in the short term,
 though he is clearly deeply ambivalent
 Pilate tries to absolve himself
 by washing his hands
 of the matter, again a
 detail only found
 in Matthew.

The crucifixion is the culmination of a horrid day, a day full of excuses,

falsehoods,
 denials,
 pettiness,
 cruelty,
 Desertion, a day that might lead one to ask:
 Is hope dead
 when everything falls apart?

Jesus does not have the market cornered on
 the days when everything seems to fall apart, does he?
 Since last Palm Sunday, when I talked about Tufts student
 Rumeysa Ozturk's detention,
 40 people have died in ICE's custody in 2025 and thus far in 2026
 many of them outside the public eye,
 many due to inadequate medical care.
 Most folks are in custody for civil, not criminal,
 Charges, charges that normally do not result
 in imprisonment let alone death

Even when not facing detainment, deportation, or death,
 the bad days can be legion, can't they— like
 Trying to stay sober in this world that drinks alcohol
 to celebrate, to cope, to grieve, when we're bored,
 when your team wins, when your team loses,
 When your team plays, at book clubs, on dates,
 at home, in restaurants,
 you name it, alcohol is normally invited.

Or maybe you are struggling with trying— emphasis on trying—
 to keep yourself and/or your loved ones healthy and safe
 which is getting harder and harder
 Particularly as we all pretend it's the individual who is troubled
 and that there are not significant societal or cultural forces
 grinding us up, spitting us out, particularly younger folks.
 Like the events of the Passion,
 we would not be blamed for calling
 all this [gesticulates wildly] bad—
 because sometimes it is.
 Is hope dead?

In Matthew's version of the Passion, Jesus somewhat reflects the day's awfulness.

Most famously, Jesus' last words in Matthew are,

“My God, my God why have you forsaken me”–

A cry of anguish and abandonment

A question that stings even if you **do** know

Jesus is quoting Psalm 22.

Christians remember the day that everything seemed to fall apart for Jesus

as ultimately a good day,

good because the events of this day are one of the primary times

where we cannot ignore

that the divine never said all of our days would be what

we would call good,

the parts we write about in annual holiday letters,

post about on social media,

or share at our high school reunions.

The fact of the matter is, the divine can **also** work through

and with mess and ickiness and chaos–

what we are embarrassed about or ashamed of

what we don't want to admit,

what we struggle mightily with

what we hate

What we don't want other people to know

not always– but it is possible.

During Jesus' last day

The betrayal,

the denials,

the injustice,

the broken system,

the mob mentality,

the cruel teasing,

the ridiculous pettiness

the lies,

the powerful feigning powerlessness,

the bad choices

The disconnection

none of it gets the last say

NONE of it

PAUSE

Because even w/ all of these things, all these people, all these systems working together,
 consciously and subconsciously,
 purposefully and accidentally,
 all conspiring, with action and inaction, for their own reasons,
 to keep people from being interested in Jesus' ideas
 & Jesus as a person
 to silence Jesus— Hope refuses to die.
 I say that because here we are,
 on another continent,
 in another language,
 worshipping in a different
 religious tradition
 nearly two thousand years later,
 still listening to Jesus.
When everything fell apart, hope refused to die.

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day ends
 With Alexander's mom saying "Some days are like that... even in Australia"
 Where Alexander keeps threatening to move if things don't start looking up.
 There is no resolution. No promise the very next day will be better,
 no trying to convince him to look for silver linings.
 no parents breaking their necks &
 exhausting themselves trying to
 frantically quick wash his favorite pajamas .

We too were never, ever promised linear progress.
 God never said that certain things would or would not happen or happen again
 in our lifetimes
 What God does say through the events of Holy Week and Easter is this:
 When everything is falling apart, Hope is alive.
 No matter what it feels or looks like,
 the story is not yet over.
Hope is still alive. Amen.