

Palm Sunday, April 10, 2022

A ridiculous scene, like the play acting of children.
A man riding on a colt
 as if it were a great white stallion.
A crowd shouting, "Blessed is the King."
 as if their shouts could grant him royalty.
People laying their cloaks on the road
 as if they were rolling out a red carpet.

The Pharisees thought it all foolish.
"Teacher, order your disciples to stop," they commanded.
"I tell you," the man on the colt replied,
"if these were silent the stones themselves would shout."

And those words might have made the scene
 more ludicrous than ever
 except that the man spoke with authority.
The man on the colt spoke with power
 that made the ridiculous sublime.
"If these were silent the stones themselves would shout."

The crowds were *not* silent.
Throughout the week people shouted.
 "Lord, should we strike with the sword?"
 "Prophecy! Who struck you?"
 "Crucify, crucify him."

The stones cried out, too.
At three in the afternoon
 the sun's light failed
 the earth shook
 the rocks were split
 the women wept
 and all creation wailed.

"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit," he said.
And having said it, he died.
 The foolish man on the colt died
 The broken man on the cross died
 The would-be king breathed his last
 And the rocks themselves cried.

We know what comes next
How anxious we are to get there
 to leave this shouting behind
 to celebrate who the foolish broken
 would-be king truly was
 and shout again our praise!

But we need to linger here.
We need to pitch a tent and camp out in this moment
Because God is here in this pain
 teaching us how to live in it
 giving us new life through it

redeeming every moment
of suffering and sorrowing and dying.

We will linger here
for a week
a Holy Week.

We will hear the painful shouting
and know the wrenching silence
through which God will carve out a space
a cave in the stones of our hearts
a hollow that will be filled with joy
when we come at last to Easter.

Bishop Susan E. Goff



The Rt. Rev. Susan Goff is the Bishop Suffragan and Ecclesiastical Authority of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia. She was elected Bishop Suffragan and consecrated in 2012. She became Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in 2018, upon the retirement of the Bishop Shannon Johnston. Bishop Goff oversees the mission and ministry of the Diocese in all its multiple dimensions during the interim time between Bishops Diocesan, with a particular focus on strengthening relationships between God, congregations, diocesan leadership and related organizations. She has a particular passion for justice ministries and for the full inclusion of all of God's beloved in the faith community. In addition to her work in the Diocese, Bishop Goff is licensed as a visiting bishop in our companion Diocese of Liverpool in England. She also represents The Episcopal Church in relationships with the Anglican

Church in Central America (IARCA).

Since she was ordained in 1980, Bishop Goff has ministered in the Diocese of Virginia. She began her service as a school Chaplain, first at St. Margaret's in Tappahannock, then at St. Catherine's in Richmond. From there she was called to be Rector of Immanuel, Old Church, and later as Rector of St. Christopher's, Springfield. She became Canon to the Ordinary in 2010, and from that position she was elected bishop.

Bishop Goff received her Master of Divinity degree with distinction from Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology, Magna Cum Laude, from Douglass College (Rutgers University) in New Jersey. While a seminarian, she directed Eagle's Nest Camp, the summer camp of the Diocese of Newark. During a two-year leave of absence from seminary, she lived and worked among Arapaho people on the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming.

Bishop Goff is a visual artist who creates mixed media canvasses and sculptures that include found objects. She and her husband, the Rev. Tom Holliday, share their colorful, art-filled home in Richmond, Virginia, with their chihuahua, Georgia, and their Amazon parrot, Jasper.