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## PODCAST START:

[intro music]

Brian: Welcome to the Queer Theology podcast!

Fr. Shay: Where each episode, we take a queer look at the week's lectionary readings. We're the cofounders of QueerTheology.com and the hosts for this podcast. I'm Father Shay Kearns —

B: And I'm Brian G. Murphy. Hey there! This coming Sunday is Palm Sunday, and so we're going to be taking a queer look at Holy Week for this episode of the Queer Theology podcast. So Shay, Holy Week is upon us. What comes up for you when you think about that and queerness combined?

FS: Yeah, man, there's just so much! We have a list of like seventeen different passages that we could potentially talk about this week. I think we're just going to kind of chat about the meaning of the week as a whole. I think for me – growing up, we always did this sort of triumphant Palm Sunday celebration at church, and then we didn't have any other services, and then it was Easter Sunday. So like, Jesus triumphantly enters into Jerusalem, and then he's resurrected. [laughs] We never talked about him dying... we didn't really talk about the Last Supper. I mean, it was *kind* of included in the story, but we got this sort of triumph-to-triumph. One of the things that I've really appreciated about being in a more liturgical tradition is how we really see the story arc of this week. It's not just triumph-to-triumph. It's this really dramatic story that starts with this triumphant procession into Jerusalem and has these quiet moments of Jesus with his closest friends, but then also has betrayal and torture and a horrific death. But then also – that that's not the end of the story. There's just a lot, from a storytelling perspective, that I love in the midst of this week. I think, too, the more that I've studied the historical context that all of this was written in, the more I've come to appreciate that this story is really, really radical. Jesus was not the only messiah in this era – there were lots of other people who led political movements and lots of other people even who were called messiahs, lots of other messiahs who were killed. But the difference is in Jesus's story: his commitment to nonviolence, the story of his resurrection, the impact that the belief in his resurrection had on his followers. All of that is really radical and really beautiful and amazing. I love getting the chance to enter into this week. None of that is particularly queer, except for the fact that being a queer person and being involved in the queer community has made me appreciate the need for activism in a different way, and has made me appreciate the need to reclaim our histories

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and stories. And, of course, the emphasis on bodies is really important, and has been important to me throughout looking at Jesus's passion narrative. So what about you?

B: You know, I see sort of a correlation between Palm Sunday and Pride parades, LGBT Pride parades. Where I see the similarities is that, you know, the first Pride parade was actually a Pride march, and it was to honor the anniversary of the Stonewall riots. At Queer Theology we sometimes say the first Pride was a riot, and to sort of remember that, though our history there. Over the years, Stonewall itself and the history of Pride has become sanitized and glossed over and made sort of celebratory and palatable for the masses, and has lost a little bit of its activist edge. I think, similarly with Palm Sunday – Palm Sunday was a nonviolent direct action. It was this complete spectacle of the messiah riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. Over the years, it's sort of been coopted by the public, become this more sanitized, apolitical, very religious, tame story. When in fact, it was really a radical thing, a radical thing to do – to just march into the seat of Roman power, or into a seat of Roman power, and challenge the empire directly. I see parallels between the Jesus story and the LGBT story and Pride. I like seeing that connection.

FS: I also think, along with this emphasis of Palm Sunday as a protest march, what follows from Palm Sunday is also what happens when we nonviolently stand against power. Right? The crowds turn on you, and people get pissed, and the powers that be get pissed, and often you end up dead. Or in prison. I think it's important to remember both the consequences of those actions but also, for me, there's a kind of peace in knowing that we aren't the first people to face down scary political powers. We're not the first people to need to protest. Sadly, we probably also won't be the last. We're part of this continuum. These actions do matter, and they do make a difference, and we need to have courage in the face of fear and power. We need to go boldly forward.

B: Absolutely. Over the years we've done a number of things around Holy Week and Lent and Easter and Good Friday, and so we will put a link to a round-up of all those things in the show notes, which you can find at [QueerTheology.com/173](http://QueerTheology.com/173). Also, this coming Saturday we are doing a webinar on queering the Bible, seeing our queer stories in scripture. We're going to take a look at the passion narrative and Shay's trans passion narrative, and how he sees echoes of his transgender journey in the passion narrative. We're going to talk a little about how you can find queer narratives in scripture and write those yourselves as well. If you'd like to join us for that, it's this Saturday afternoon. You can go to [QueerTheology.com/queerbible](http://QueerTheology.com/queerbible) to sign up.

[outro music plays]

B: The Queer Theology podcast is just one of many things that we do at QueerTheology.com, which provides resources, community and inspiration for LGBTQ Christians and straight cisgender supporters.

FS: To dive into more of the action, visit us at QueerTheology.com. You can also connect with us online on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Instagram.

B: We'll see you next week.

**PODCAST END**

Transcript by Taylor Walker