

03/29/2026 Homily

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/032926.cfm>

In Jesus' times, the Romans loved military parades, because through them, they used to show their power to govern the world. Today, Palm Sunday, we commemorate the moment when Jesus arrives at Jerusalem. It becomes a parade. A huge crowd of excited well-wishers welcomes Jesus by waving palm branches. Some take off their coats and spread them along the route. This is a traditional sign of honor and welcome for high dignitaries. Who is the great dignitary of this parade? Ironically, it is a simple and unarmed man, not riding a strong, impressive horse, but riding a donkey. Those who have popular expectations about a powerful Messiah who would come for salvation and liberation may have lost their hope when they saw the peasant of Nazareth. Some thought that Jesus was arriving to raise an army, run the Romans out of Judea, and establish a new government. And Jesus went to Jerusalem to be condemned, to suffer and to die. There is a lot of irony in the narrative of the Lord's Passion. We all would like to welcome God among us with joy. But the God of Jesus comes to us, not as we expected....

We think we know who God is. God is that divine being Who can do anything He wants. God is all powerful, strong, righteous, and decisive. Then, God shows up among us as a gentle, humble man, sitting on the back of a donkey. What kind of power does Jesus bring to the world? He preaches love rather than violence, He comes not with the power to coerce and force, but rather with an outstretched hand, reaching out to those who thought that they have no hope. Our God has come in an unexpected way: Jesus did not come to condemn us, even though we often behave like his enemies. He did not come to destroy us or to proclaim God's vengeance. Jesus did not come to announce an apocalyptic end of humanity. Rather, He has come because He is in love with us. Jesus' divine power will be manifested on the cross.

In a world when so many things go the wrong way, love is the power of God, love to forgive and to restore what is broken; and this divine love is the reason for everything He does. This Palm Sunday we are challenged to lay aside our preconceptions of salvation, deliverance, and power, and take our place in this parade. It is through the power of love that we renew ourselves and our world. The Lord calls us to follow him, by loving ourselves, one another and God's creation.

May this Holy Week help us to change whatever prevents God's love dwelling within us, to shine in the world. May we become living signs of God's love, in a world broken by hate and suffering; love to unite what is divided; love to disperse darkness and to satisfy our deepest hungers and thirst; love to raise the dead and guide us towards the way of righteousness and justice. The power of Jesus is not military or political, or material, or economic. Jesus doesn't even have religious or moral power. Love is the power of Jesus that takes us into the direction we need to go through. God's love knows no bounds. The mysteries of God begin and end with his love for us.

The Universal Prayer  
Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord  
29th March 2026

Celebrant:

Sisters and brothers, in entering into the mystery of the Passion of Jesus, we reach out in prayer for all whose lives are marked with suffering.

1. For our Holy Father, Pope Leo, may he lead the Church prayerfully into this most holy of weeks.

Lord, have mercy.

2. For the Church in suffering, may the many Christians enduring persecution be sustained in grace and hope.

Lord, have mercy.

3. For our broken world, may the wars across the Holy Land, Lebanon and the Middle East, in Ukraine and many other places, come to an end so that peace is restored everywhere.

Lord, have mercy.

4. For people everywhere, may despair and pain be lifted from every heart so that hope is restored to everyone.

Lord, have mercy.

5. For those preparing for their Easter baptism, may Jesus Christ be their life always; and for those preparing for full communion in the Catholic Church that the Spirit will be their guide.

Lord, have mercy.

6. For those who have died, may the Passion of Jesus and his faithfulness to the Father's will be the source of their eternal life.

Lord, have mercy.

Celebrant:

O God, as you unite the suffering people of our Church and world to the passion and death of your Son, Jesus, so we pray with great trust and confidence, that they may share the glory of his resurrection, for he lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.