

Palm Sunday-A: “The King on a Donkey”: Is 50:4-7; Phil 2:6-11 ; **Mt 26: 14-27 or Mt 27:11-54**

Joke: A husband and wife had a serious quarrel. It was one of those “cold war” moments — silence in the car, tension so thick you could cut it with a knife. As they were driving to a family marriage, they passed a donkey standing in a field. The husband looked at it and sarcastically asked his wife, Honey look at “Relative of yours?” immediately, his wife answered, **“Yes — by marriage!”**.

That donkey becomes a good starting point for today. Because today, on Palm Sunday, we meet a King on a donkey. **Not a king on a war horse. Not a king in armor. Not a king coming to conquer by force.** But Jesus, humble and peaceful, riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. And that is the first great lesson of today: **God does not save us through pride, power, or violence — but through humility, surrender, and love.**

1. Palm Sunday is a day of contrast: Today’s liturgy is full of contrast. At the beginning, the people cry out: **“Hosanna to the Son of David!”** But soon enough, the same crowd cries: **“Crucify Him!”** That is not just their story. That is also our story. There are moments when we welcome Jesus with palms, prayers, hymns, and devotion. And there are other moments when, by our sins, by our compromise, by our selfishness, by our silence when we should speak for truth, we also cry out — not with our lips, but with our lives — **“Crucify Him.”** So Palm Sunday is not just a procession. **It is a mirror.** It asks us: **Where do I stand with Jesus? Am I only with Him when it is easy and joyful? Or will I stay with Him also in suffering, sacrifice, and the Cross?**

2. Isaiah shows us the suffering servant: In the first reading, Isaiah gives us the image of the Suffering Servant: **“I gave my back to those who beat me... my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting.”** What is amazing is this: **The servant does not run away. He does not turn back. He remains faithful.**

That is exactly what Jesus does. Jesus knows what is waiting for Him in Jerusalem — betrayal, humiliation, rejection, pain, and death — and still He goes forward. Why? Because **He loves us.**

My brothers and sisters, Jesus did not go to the Cross by accident. He went there deliberately, freely, and lovingly. Every lash, every insult, every wound, every drop of blood says one thing to us: **“I love you. I will not give up on you.”** And that should move our hearts deeply during this Holy Week.

3. St. Paul gives us the heart of Jesus: In the second reading, St. Paul tells us: **“Christ Jesus... emptied Himself... taking the form of a slave... He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.”**

This is the mystery we celebrate today: the humility of God. **The One who created the universe allowed Himself to be mocked. The One before whom angels bow allowed Himself to be spat upon.**

The One who is Lord of all accepted the Cross.

Why? So that we might be saved. The world tells us: **“Promote yourself. Protect yourself. Think of yourself first.”** But Jesus teaches us another way: **Humble yourself. Give yourself. Trust God.** That is why Palm Sunday is not just about what happened to Jesus. It is about **the kind of heart we are called to have.** If Jesus humbled Himself for us, then surely, we can humble ourselves: **to forgive, to repent, to say “I am sorry,” to let go of pride, to return to God with all our heart.**

4. The Passion story asks us: Who am I?: As we listen to the Passion according to Matthew, we meet many characters. And each one asks us a question.

Judas asks: *Have I betrayed Jesus for something cheap?*

Peter asks: *Have I denied Jesus out of fear?*

Pilate asks: *Do I go against my conscience to please people?*

The crowd asks: *How easily do I follow the noise of the world?*

Simon of Cyrene asks: *Am I willing to help carry the Cross?*

Mary asks: *Will I remain faithful even in sorrow?* Palm Sunday invites us to place ourselves in the Passion story and ask: Lord, where am I in all this? Because the truth is, all of us have a little Judas, a little Peter, and a little Pilate in us.

But thanks be to God, by His mercy, we can also become like Simon, like Mary Magdalene, like John, like the good thief.

5. A practical invitation for Holy Week: My dear brothers and sisters, Holy Week will be holy for us only if we enter into it. Do not let this be just another week.

Come with Jesus: **to the Upper Room on Holy Thursday, to Calvary on Good Friday, and to the empty tomb at Easter.** And if possible, please do one very important thing this week: **go to Confession. Do not let Jesus weep over a hard heart. Let Him heal you. Let Him forgive you. Let Him cleanse your heart.**

And when you take your palm home today, do not treat it like decoration only. Put it somewhere visible. Let it remind you: **Christ is King of this home. Christ is King of this family. Christ is King of my heart.**

So today, as Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey, let us welcome Him not only with palms in our hands, but with surrender in our hearts. Let us not only sing “Hosanna” today, and then forget Him tomorrow. Instead, let us walk with Him this Holy Week — all the way to the Cross — so that we may also share in the joy of His Resurrection. And may we become like that humble donkey: **not drawing attention to ourselves, but simply carrying Jesus to the world.** Amen