

Palm Sunday

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today we stand at the threshold of the most sacred week of our year. We have just heard the long and moving account of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our celebration began with the joyful waving of palm branches and the shouting of "Hosanna!" yet it ends in the quiet, heavy shadow of the Cross. This shift in mood is not just a historical memory; it is a mirror held up to our own souls. As we begin this Holy Week, we must ask ourselves: Who is this King we welcome today? The world is used to kings who sit on golden thrones and rule with power, wealth, and force. But Jesus enters Jerusalem on a humble donkey. He does not carry a sword; He carries the weight of our peace. By choosing a donkey—a beast of burden—Jesus shows us that He is a King who comes to serve, not to be served. He comes to carry the heavy loads that we cannot carry ourselves: our sins, our fears, our grief, and our failures.

The Gospel story takes a painful turn that we must reflect upon deeply. The same voices that shouted "Hosanna" on Sunday were the ones shouting "Crucify Him" on Friday. This is a difficult truth for us to face. It shows us the faithlessness of the human heart and the fragility of our own faith. It is easy to follow Jesus when the sun is shining and the crowds are cheering. It is easy to be a Christian when life is going well and our prayers seem to be answered exactly how we want. But what happens when the shadows fall? What happens when following Jesus means sacrifice, silence, or standing alone against the crowd? Holy Week is a time for us to examine our own faithfulness. Are we "Sunday Christians" who praise Him with our lips but abandon Him in our daily choices? Do we turn away from Him when we face trials or when the world pressures us to fit in? Today, Jesus invites us to stay with Him, not just in the parade, but all the way to the foot of the Cross. He asks us to be the ones who do not run away when things get difficult.

In our readings, we see the incredible humility of our God. St. Paul tells us that Jesus "emptied Himself." Think about that for a moment. The Creator of the universe allowed Himself to be mocked, spat upon, and beaten. He who is all-powerful became weak so that He could meet us in our weakness. He did not run away from the pain because He knew that the only way to save us was to go through it. Every lash of the whip and every thorn in His crown was an act of love for you and for me. He took the punishment that we deserved so that we could receive the mercy we did not earn.

Let us look at the Crucified Christ and see not a victim, but a Victor. His arms are stretched wide on the Cross to embrace the whole world, refusing to let anyone go. He is our Eternal High Priest who offers Himself as the perfect Paschal Lamb. When we feel the weight of our own mistakes and iniquities, let us remember that He has already carried them to Calvary.

Brothers and sisters, let us enter this Holy Week with hearts full of gratitude and holy awe. Let us ask the Holy Spirit for the grace to be truly faithful. May we not only call Him "King" today with our palms, but may we live with Him as our King every day of our lives. Let us walk with Him through the darkness of Calvary, trusting that the light of the Resurrection is waiting for us. May this be a time of deep conversion and renewal for us all.

May God bless you and your families, and may you have a most holy and fruitful Holy Week.