

04/02/2023. Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

Is.50:4-7; Phil.2:6-11; Mtt.26:14—27:66

We celebrate today both Palm Sunday and Passion Sunday. The Holy week liturgy presents us with the actual events of the dying and rising of Jesus.

It was Palm Sunday but because of a sore throat, 5-year-old Annie stayed home from church with her mother. When the rest of the family returned home, they were carrying palm fronds. Annie asked them what they were for. "People held them over Jesus' head as he rode by on a colt," her father explained. "Wouldn't you know it," Annie fussed, "the one Sunday I'm sick and Jesus shows up and offers pony rides!" The same with Holy week service

It is on Palm Sunday that we enter Holy week and welcome Jesus into our lives, asking him to allow us a share in his suffering, death and Resurrection. We are reminded that, as Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowds shouted "Hosanna"—which is Hebrew for "Grant your salvation!" It is a form of exultant greeting and acclaim.

We wear red dress today because it signals the blood of martyrs; and Jesus is the greatest martyr. He gave us His body and blood, not only on the cross, but also in the most holy Eucharist, which is really, truly, and substantially His body, blood, soul, and divinity. In the blood of Christ which flowed from His crucified body we are liberated from the ultimate consequences of our sins if we follow in the way of Peter and not in the way of Judas. God offers, we respond, and everything depends upon our response.

We need to answer 4 questions today: 1) Does Jesus weep over my sinful soul as he wept over Jerusalem at the beginning of his Palm Sunday procession? 2) Am I a barren fig tree? God expects me to produce fruits of holiness, purity, justice, humility, obedience, charity, and forgiveness. Do I? Or worse, do I continue to produce bitter fruits of impurity, injustice, pride, hatred, jealousy and selfishness? 3) Do I welcome Jesus into my heart? Am I ready to surrender my life to him during this Holy Week and welcome him into all areas of my life as my Lord and Savior?

4) Are we like the humble donkey that carried Jesus, bringing Jesus' universal love, unconditional forgiveness and sacrificial service to our families, places of work and communities by the way we live our lives? Let

us take a fresh look at this familiar event. We might be surprised at what we see and it could change us forever. **Amen.**