

## Passion (Palm) Sunday

Dear Children,

For the last 40 days we have been preparing for the season of Easter by observing our Lenten obligations and focusing on our good intentions. This weekend is Palm Sunday, or Passion Sunday, which is the last Sunday of Lent. It is a very important day because it is the start of Holy Week, which is the most sacred time of the year in the church. During this special time we commemorate the Passion of the Christ or Jesus' crucifixion, death, and resurrection. It is a time for us to reflect on the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. As we celebrate Mass we must remember how much Jesus loves us, so much that he was willing to die for us. Although his death is sad, we must remember that he rose from the dead and brought us everlasting life.

Today's Mass begins with the Procession with Palms, which includes a special reading from the gospel. Palm branches represent goodness, triumph, peace, and eternal life. In the gospel according to Luke, you will learn about how Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem for the last time. He went willingly, knowing God's plan for him. People had heard about Jesus' reputation as a healer and a teacher. As he entered the city, people greeted him with excitement. It was like a parade with people waving to Jesus and shouting "Hosanna." As a sign of respect, they laid down clothing and palm branches in front of him on the ground to make it easier for him to walk. We still use palm branches in church today to commemorate this event. As we know, the cheers and welcoming that he received eventually turned to rejection when some of his followers betrayed him and he was crucified.

The Procession with Palms

*A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke (Luke 19:28-40)*

*Jesus went towards Jerusalem. As He was getting near to Bethpage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His*

*disciples on ahead. He told them, "Go into the next village where you will find a young donkey who has never been ridden. Untie the donkey and bring it here. If anyone asks you why you are doing that, just say, 'The Lord needs it.'" They went off and found everything just as Jesus had said. While they were untying the donkey, its owners asked, "Why are you doing that?" They answered, "The Lord needs it." Then they led the donkey to Jesus. They put some of their clothes on its back and helped Jesus get on. As he rode along, the people spread clothes on the road in front of Him. When Jesus was starting down the Mount of Olives, His large crowd of disciples were happy and praised God because of all the miracles they had seen. They shouted, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory to God." Some Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, make your disciples stop shouting!" But Jesus answered, "If they keep quiet, these stones will start shouting." The gospel of the Lord.*

In the first reading from Isaiah and the Responsorial Psalm, think about how hard it must have been for Jesus and how he needed to stay strong for us. He was following God's plan, but it couldn't have been easy for him. He found strength in knowing that this is what he was meant to do and that his suffering would bring us life.

*A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 50:6-7)*

*I let them beat my back and pull out my beard. I didn't turn aside when they made fun of me and spit in my face. But the Lord God keeps me from being embarrassed. And I refuse to give up, because I know I will never be ashamed. The word of the Lord.*

*Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 22:7-8, 16c-17a and 18, 19 and 20)*

*My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?*

*My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?*

Everyone who sees me makes fun and sneers. They shake their heads, and say, "Trust the Lord! If you are His favorite, let Him protect you and keep you safe."

*My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?*

My enemies have tied up my hands and feet. I can count all my bones! They took my clothes and gambled for them.

*My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?*

Don't stay far away, Lord! My strength comes from you, so hurry and help. And when Your people meet, I will praise You, Lord.

*My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?*

#### Gospel Acclamation

Glory and praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Glory and praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.*

Christ became obedient for us, even to death, dying on the cross. Therefore, God raised Him on high and gave Him a name above all other names.

*Glory and praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.*

On Holy Thursday, we commemorate or remember the last supper. Before his death, Jesus had dinner with the twelve apostles. He knew that he was going to die and wanted to have one last meal with his closest friends and those men who had supported him. During dinner he blessed the bread and wine and gave it to his friends to eat and drink as his own body and blood, just like we do every Sunday in church. After supper, Jesus went out to the garden to pray. He was frightened about

what was going to happen to him and was praying to God to give him strength. While he was in the garden, he was captured by his enemies.

In today's special gospel, which is called the passion of the Christ, we learn about the events that led up to Jesus' crucifixion and death. The leaders and priests accused Jesus of being a criminal. He was tried and sentenced to death. Many of the same people who had welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem just a few days before had now turned against him and were shouting that he should die on the cross. People made fun of Jesus and put a crown of thorns on his head to hurt him. They made him carry a large, heavy cross into the city and when he arrived, they nailed him to it to die. Jesus suffered for three hours on the cross and died on Good Friday. Later that evening, some of Jesus' friends took his body down from the cross and placed him in a tomb of rock. We call this day "Good" Friday because Jesus' death on this day shows us how much God loves us.

+ *The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. Luke (Luke 23:1-49)*

*Everyone in the council led Jesus off to Pilate. They started accusing Him and said, "We caught this man trying to get our people to riot and stop paying taxes to the Emperor. He also claims that He is our Messiah, our king." Pilate asked Jesus, "Are You the king of the Jew?" "Those are your words," Jesus answered. Pilate told the chief priests and the crowd, "I don't find Him guilty of anything." But they all kept on saying, "He has been teaching and causing trouble all over Judea. He started in Galilee and has now come all the way here." When Pilate heard this, he asked, "Is this man from Galilee?" After Pilate learned that Jesus came from the region ruled by Herod, he sent Him to Herod, who was in Jerusalem at that time. For a long time Herod had wanted to see Jesus and was very happy because he finally had this chance. He had heard many things about Jesus and hoped to see Him work a miracle. Herod asked Him a lot of questions, but Jesus did not answer. Then the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of*

Moses stood up and accused Him of all kinds of bad things. Herod and his soldiers made fun of Jesus and insulted Him. They put a fine robe on Him and sent Him back to Pilate. That same day Herod and Pilate became friends, even though they had been enemies before this. Pilate called together the chief priests, the leaders, and people. He told them, "You brought Jesus to me and said He was a troublemaker. But I have not found Him guilty of anything you say He has done. Herod didn't find Him guilty either and sent Him back. This man doesn't deserve to be put to death! I will just have Him beaten with a whip and set free." Pilate said this because at every Passover he was supposed to set one prisoner free for the Jewish people. But the whole crowd shouted, "Kill Jesus! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was in jail because he had started a riot in the city and had murdered someone. Pilate wanted to set Jesus free, so he spoke again to the crowds. But they kept shouting, "Nail Him to a cross! Nail Him to a cross!" Pilate spoke to them a third time, "But what crime has He done? I have not found Him guilty of anything for which He should be put to death. I will have Him beaten with a whip and set free." The people kept on shouting as loud as they could for Jesus to be put to death. Finally, Pilate gave in. He freed the man who was in jail for rioting and murder, because he was the one the crowd wanted to be set free. Then Pilate hand Jesus over for them to do what they wanted with Him. As Jesus was being led away, some soldiers grabbed hold of a man from Cyrene named Simon. He was coming in from the fields, but they put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large crowd was following Jesus, and in the crowd a lot of women were crying and weeping for Him. Jesus turned to the women and said: "Women of Jerusalem, don't cry for me! Cry for yourselves and for your children. Someday people will say, 'Women who never had any children are really fortunate!' At that time everyone will say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' They will say to the hills, 'Hide us!' If this can happen when the wood is green, what do you think will happen when it is dry?" Two criminals were led out to be put to death with Jesus. When the soldiers came to a place called "The Skull," they nailed Jesus to a cross. They also nailed the two

*criminals to crosses, one on each side of Jesus. Jesus said, "Father forgive these people! They don't know what they are doing." While the people stood there watching Jesus, the soldiers gambled for His clothes. The leaders insulted Him saying, "He saved others. Now He should save Himself, if He is really the Messiah." Above Him was a sign that said, "This is the King of the Jews." One of the criminals hanging there also insulted Jesus saying, "Aren't You the Messiah? Save Yourself and save us!" But the other criminal told the first one off, "Don't you fear God? Aren't you getting the same punishment as this man? We got what was coming to us, but He didn't do anything wrong." Then he said to Jesus, "Remember me when You come into power!" Jesus replied, "I promise that this day you will be with Me in paradise." Around noon the sky turned dark and stayed that way until the middle of the afternoon. The sun stopped shining, and the curtain in the temple split down the middle. Jesus shouted, "Father, I put myself in Your hands!" Then He died. When the Roman officer saw what had happened, he praised God and said, "Jesus really must have been a good man!" A crowd had gathered to see the terrible sight. After they saw it, they felt brokenhearted and went home. All of Jesus' close friends and the women who had come with Him from Galilee stood at a distance and watched. The gospel of the Lord.*

Now that you have read the gospel, think about how Jesus must have felt during this time. He suffered a great deal, all for us and must have felt very alone when it was happening. Only a few people still supported him or tried to help him. Most people who had been his friends and believed in him were now turning against him. Maybe they felt that following Jesus and believing in him was just getting too hard. Maybe they were afraid of being the one person who was strong enough to stand up for what they believed in.

Sometimes we all change our minds when something gets difficult. Maybe you are learning something new in school, playing a new sport, or learning a new instrument. It can get very hard and frustrating when things don't go your way. It can be easy to want to quit and give

up. Maybe you see something that is not right happening to someone, and you don't want to speak up because you don't want something bad to happen to you. It can be very difficult to do the right thing, but we have to try. This week I want you to remember that Jesus was willing to do the hardest thing someone could do. He gave up his life for us to save us from our sins and give us everlasting life. He did what God wanted him to do because he loved his Father and he loved us.

May you all find peace in the love of God.

Palm Sunday, 2022  
Judy Wargaski