

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD



The Church celebrates this Sixth Sunday in Lent as both Palm Sunday and Passion Sunday. It is on Palm Sunday that we enter Holy Week, welcoming Jesus into our lives and asking Him to allow us a share in His suffering, death, and Resurrection. This is the time of the year when we stop to remember and relive the events which brought about our redemption and salvation

Significance of Palm Sunday: 1) A Day to remember two contrasting moments of Christ's triumph and tragedy.

Anecdote: American president Abraham Lincoln had his moment of triumph and tragedy 160 years ago in 1865. Palm Sunday in 1865 marked the end of the Civil war. The General of the Confederate Army surrendered to the General of the Union Army. It was the greatest moment of triumph for the American president Abraham Lincoln. But he was assassinated five days later, on Good Friday, the greatest tragedy for the president and the nation.

Life Messages: 1) **Let us not cause Jesus to weep over us.** There is a Jewish saying, *"Heaven rejoices over a repentant sinner and sheds tears over a non-repentant, hardhearted one."* We need to imitate the prodigal son and return to God, our loving Father, through the Sacrament of Reconciliation during this last week of Lent so that we may participate fully in the joy of Christ's Resurrection.

2) **We need to be fruit-producing and not barren fig trees.** God expects us to produce fruits of holiness, purity, justice, humility, obedience, charity, and forgiveness. We should not continue to produce bitter fruits of impurity, injustice, pride, hatred, jealousy, and selfishness.

3) **We need to welcome Jesus into our hearts in a special way during the Holy Week.**

We must be ready to surrender our lives to Jesus during this Holy Week and welcome Him into all areas of our life as our Lord and Savior, singing *"Hosanna."* Today, we receive palm branches at the Divine Liturgy. Let us take them to our homes and put them in a place

where we can always see them. Let the palms remind us that Christ is the King of our families, that Christ is the King of our hearts, and that Christ is the only true answer to our quest for happiness and meaning in our lives. And if we do proclaim Christ as our King, let us try to make time for Him in our daily life. Let us remember that He is the One with Whom we will be spending eternity. Let us be reminded further that our careers, our education, our finances, our homes, all of the basic material needs in our lives are only temporary. Let us prioritize and place Christ the King as the primary concern in our lives. It is only when we have done this that we will find true peace and happiness in our confused and complex world.

4) We need to be ready to become like the humble donkey that carried Jesus.

As we “carry Jesus” to the world, we may receive the same welcome that Jesus received on Palm Sunday, but we may also meet the same opposition, crosses, and trials later. Like the donkey, we are called upon to carry Christ to a world that does not know Him. Let us always remember that a Christian without Christ is a contradiction in terms. Such a one betrays the Christian message. Hence, let us become transparent Christians during this Holy Week, enabling others to see in us Jesus’ universal love, unconditional forgiveness, and sacrificial service.

5) We need to face these hard questions on Palm Sunday.

Are we willing to follow Jesus, not just to Church but in our daily life? *Are we willing* to entrust ourselves to Him even when the future is frightening or confusing, believing God has a plan? *Are we willing* to serve Him until that day when His plan for us on earth is fulfilled? These are the questions of Palm Sunday. Let us take a fresh look at this familiar event. It could change us forever, because the Passion of Jesus shows us that, though we are sinners who have crucified Jesus, we are able, by His gift, to turn back to Jesus again and ask for his mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is through the Passion of Jesus that we receive forgiveness: *“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with His stripes we are healed.” (Is 53:5).*

6) On which side will we take a stand?

Will we say by our life and the way we live, *“Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord?”* Or will we say by our life and the way we live, *“Crucify Him,”* and, like Pilate, wash our hands of Him?

Jokes of the Week: 1) Little Johnny was sick on Palm Sunday and stayed home from Church with his mother. His father returned from Church holding a palm branch. The little boy was curious and asked, *“Why do you have that palm branch, Dad?”* His father explained, “You see, when Jesus came into town, everyone waved palm branches to honor Him; so we got palm branches today.” “Aw, shucks,” grumbled Little Johnny. *“The one Sunday I can’t go to Church, and Jesus shows up!”*