

The Church celebrates this sixth Sunday of Lent as both **Palm Sunday and Passion Sunday**. This is the time of year we stop to remember and relive the events which brought about our redemption and salvation. What we commemorate and relive during this week is not just Jesus' dying and rising, but our own dying and rising in him, which will result in our healing, reconciliation, and redemption.

Attentive participation in the Holy Week liturgy will deepen our relationship with God, increase our Faith and strengthen our lives as disciples of Jesus. Today's liturgy combines contrasting moments, one of glory, the other of suffering: the royal welcome of Jesus in Jerusalem and the drama of the trial, culminating in crucifixion, death and burial for the Christ.

Does Jesus weep over me? There is a Jewish saying, "Heaven rejoices over a repentant sinner and sheds tears over a non-repentant, hardhearted one." Are we ready to imitate the prodigal son and return to God, our loving Father, through the Sacrament of Reconciliation during this last week of Lent and participate fully in the joy of Christ's Resurrection?

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?

Will Jesus need to cleanse my heart with His whip? Jesus cannot tolerate the desecration of the temple of the Holy Spirit in me by my addiction to uncharitable, neither does the Christ praise my calculation of loss and gain in my relationship with God.

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, 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 be reminded 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.

Are we ready to become like the humble donkey that carried Jesus? As we “carry Jesus” to the world, we can expect to receive the same welcome that Jesus received on Palm Sunday, but we must also expect to 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.

Can we face these 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 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 we are sinners who have crucified Jesus, and we are able to turn to Jesus again and ask for his mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is through the Passion of Jesus we receive forgiveness, “*through his wounds we are healed.*” (Isaiah 53:5)