

Palm Sunday

The beginning of Holy Week

The Holiest week for Christians throughout the world

**We begin our Masses today by recalling Jesus' triumphant
entrance into Jerusalem**

Our Gospel then tells of his passion

His suffering and death on Mt Calvary

The same crowd

Crying out '*Hosanna*' on Sunday

Calling out '*Crucify him*' a few days later

He wasn't surprised

Remember the reading only a couple weeks ago:

He did not need anyone to tell him about human nature

He knew it well

He didn't get all puffed up with the accolades

He knew well what was coming

As we begin Holy Week

It is important to recall this isn't about what others did to Jesus

It is not a history lesson

It is our story as well

We all have our own Jerusalem to face in our lives

We all live up to expectations as disciples at times

We all fail to live up to them at other times

We are called to admit our role in his crucifixion

Judas was one of his close companions

Selected by Jesus to be an apostle

But Judas wanted things his way

He wanted glory, not humility

He wanted authority

Not meekness

Judas thought he knew better than Christ

How often are we Judas?

When we think the Mass should be this way or another

I'm bored

When we decide enough is enough

I will leave Mass when I want to

Remember, Judas left early as well

I decide that Christmas and Easter are enough

Or making the effort to get to Mass once a month is enough

When we want to live a morality to our own liking

We think the church has too many rules to live by

The Mass becomes a convenience

And if it is not convenient, then I will find something that is

How often are we Peter?

We know Jesus

But then gather around our personal campfires

In the car, in the break room, at family dinners

Do our conversations acknowledge that we know him?

Eating the Body of Christ at the Eucharist

And treat our neighbor with gossip, neglect or jealousy

How often are we Pilate?

Trying to please our family and friends

At the expense of our faith and values

Why are we not willing to lose a human friendship?

But willing to let our relationship with God slide

Perhaps we are being called to enter into our own Jerusalem

Not a city, but perhaps a serious illness or accident

Perhaps something in our marriage or job

Any challenge or uncertainty in our life

Things we might be aware of right now

Things that might come out of the blue

Jesus shows us how to be prepared

He shows us how to move forward

He has been there

He will be there

We do not enter this Jerusalem alone

He shows us the cross is not the end

But with his grace, it will lead to new life and salvation

Let us close with a bit of a homily by St Gregory Nazianzen

We are soon going to share in the Passover

So let us take our part in the Passover prescribed by the law,

Not in a literal way, but according to the teaching of the Gospel;

Not only for a time, but eternally

Not in an imperfect way, but perfectly;

Let us regard as our home the heavenly Jerusalem,

Not the earthly one;

We are not required to sacrifice young bulls or rams,

But instead, let us join the choirs of angels

Offering God upon his heavenly altar a sacrifice of praise.

Turning our eyes toward the Holy of Holies

We must sacrifice ourselves to God,

Each day and in everything we do,

Accepting all that happens to us for the sake of the Word,

Imitating his passion by our sufferings

Honoring his blood by shedding our own.

We must be ready to be crucified.

If you are a Simon of Cyrene, take up your cross and follow Christ.

If you are crucified beside him like one of the thieves, now,

Like the good thief, acknowledge your God.

For your sake, and because of your sin,

Christ himself was regarded as a sinner;

For his sake, therefore, you must cease to sin.

Worship him who was hung on the cross because of you,

Even if you are hanging there yourself.

Derive some benefit from the very shame;

Purchase salvation with your death.

Enter paradise with Jesus,

Contemplate the glories there

If you are a Joseph of Arimathea,

Go to the one who ordered his crucifixion,

And ask for Christ's body.

Make your own the expiation for the sins of the whole world.

If you are a Nicodemus,

The man who worshipped God by night,

Bring spices and prepare Christ's body for burial.

If you are one of the Marys, or Salome, or Joanna,

Weep in the early morning.

Be the first to see the stone rolled back,

And even the angels perhaps, and Jesus himself.