

PRAYING PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD 2023

Holy Week – 2 April 2023



WELCOME TO HOLY WEEK

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 21:1-11

We begin outside the church building for the Gospel Reading Matthew 21:1-11
Jesus was outside Jerusalem at *“Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives”*

What excitement for the large gathering of people!
Their healer, their prophet the Son of David,
They shout *“Hosanna to the Son of David!”*

We bless the palms today, as the Gospel proclaims:
*“Great crowds of people spread their cloaks on the road,
while others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in his path.”*

And we process into our Church,
after hearing in the Gospel that
*“The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,
‘Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!’ “*

Imagine the hurried conversations, the buzz in the crowd
as they shared their opinions about who Jesus really was.
*“When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking,
‘Who is this?’ The crowds were saying, ‘This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.’”*

Yet it was only after the events of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday
that the disciples understood in depth.

It is a journey that we enter into this week, this Holy Week,
and especially the last days of the week that we call the triduum.

Let us pause and pray for each other as we begin this journey.

[pause]

Once in the church, after palms are placed in the sanctuary,
We pray to God,

- who gave to humanity Jesus Christ our Saviour
- as a model of humility.

We ask God to help us witness to God

- by following the example of Jesus
- and making us worthy to share his resurrection

Only after this time of prayer, do we listen fully to the Readings

- Isaiah 50:4-7
- Psalm 22
- Philippians 2/6-11
- Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

INSIGHTS FROM THE HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS 2020 FOR THIS CELEBRATION

Three years ago, in the homily of Pope Francis for this celebration, he reminded us that

“Jesus “emptied himself, taking the form of a servant” (Phil 2:7).

Let us allow these words of the Apostle Paul to lead us into these holy days,

when the word of God, like a refrain, presents Jesus as servant:

on Holy Thursday, he is portrayed as the servant who washes the feet of his disciples;

on Good Friday, he is presented as the suffering and victorious servant (cf. Is 52:13);

and tomorrow we will hear the prophecy of Isaiah about him:

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold” (Is 42:1).

God saved us by serving us. We often think we are the ones who serve God.

No, he is the one who freely chose to serve us, for he loved us first.

It is difficult to love and not be loved in return.

And it is even more difficult to serve if we do not let ourselves be served by God.

But – just one question – how did the Lord serve us? By giving his life for us.

... His love for us led him to sacrifice himself and to take upon himself our sins.

This astonishes us:

God saved us by taking upon himself all the punishment of our sins.

*Without complaining, but with the humility, patience and obedience of a servant,
and purely out of love. And the Father upheld Jesus in his service.*

He did not take away the evil that crushed him,

but rather strengthened him in his suffering

so that our evil could be overcome by good, by a love that loves to the very end.”

Later in his homily, Pope Francis called us to our mission to love.

“Dear brothers and sisters, what can we do in comparison with God,

who served us even to the point of being betrayed and abandoned?

We can refuse to betray him for whom we were created,

*and not abandon what really matters in our lives.
We were put in this world to love him and our neighbours.
Everything else passes away, only this remains.
... For life is measured by love. So, in these holy days, in our homes,
let us stand before the Crucified One – look upon the Crucified One! –
the fullest measure of God’s love for us,
and before the God who serves us to the point of giving his life, and, –
fixing our gaze on the Crucified One – let us ask for the grace to live in order to serve.
May we reach out to those who are suffering and those most in need.
May we not be concerned about what we lack, but what good we can do for others.
... Do not be afraid to devote your life to God and to others; it pays!
For life is a gift we receive only when we give ourselves away,
and our deepest joy comes from saying yes to love, without ifs and buts.
To truly say yes to love, without ifs and buts. As Jesus did for us.”*

A PARISH PRAYER DURING HOLY WEEK

We pray to you, Loving God,
that we may respond to all we meet, with the love of Jesus Christ.
We pray that as family, we may accompany each other in prayer.
We pray that we may journey in love and gratitude.
We thank you, Loving God.
Amen.

Father Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/040223.cfm>

Please see following page for photographs taken at Palm Sunday 7.30am Mass



Photographs in clockwise direction:
Prayer before sprinkling the palms with holy water. Deacon Minje Kim reads the Gospel.
Triumphant procession into church waving the blessed palms and singing Sing Hosanna.
Our parish family singing and waving the palms. Holy Week begins...we accompany Jesus on His journey.