

Homily “Palm (Palm)Sunday:” (St. Jude Parish)

(The Beginning of Holy Week)

Dear brothers and Sisters,

Today we celebrate Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week, a day filled with both joy and sorrow, triumph and suffering. We begin with palms in our hands, remembering how Jesus entered Jerusalem and was welcomed by the crowds shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

It was a moment of excitement and hope. The people believed that Jesus was the one who would save them. Yet, as we listen to the Passion Gospel, we see how quickly everything changes. The same crowd that welcomed Him would later reject Him. The voices that cried “Hosanna” would soon cry out, “Crucify Him.” This dramatic shift invites us to reflect deeply on our own lives and our own faith.

The first reading from Isaiah presents the image of the Suffering Servant, one who remains faithful even in the face of rejection and pain: “I gave my back to those who beat me... my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting.”

This is a prophecy of Jesus, who accepts suffering not because He is powerless, but because He is completely obedient to the Father and filled with love for us. He does not run away from the cross. He embraces it. This shows us that true strength is not found in avoiding suffering, but in facing it with trust in God.

St. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, takes us even deeper into the mystery of Christ. He tells us that Jesus, though He was in the form of God, did not cling to His equality with God but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even to death on a cross.

This is the heart of our faith: a God who lowers Himself, who serves, who gives everything out of love. And because of this humility, God exalts Him. This teaches us a powerful lesson: the way to true life, true greatness, and true glory is not through power or pride, but through humility, sacrifice, and love.

In the Passion according to Matthew, we walk step by step with Jesus through His suffering. We see Judas betray Him, Peter deny Him, the disciples abandon Him, and the authorities condemn Him unjustly. Jesus is mocked, beaten, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the cross. Yet, through all of this, He remains silent, patient, and forgiving. He does not respond with anger or hatred. Instead, He continues to love. Even on the cross, He gives Himself completely. This is the depth of God's love for us—a love that does not give up, even when rejected.

Palm Sunday, therefore, is not just about remembering these events. It is about recognizing ourselves in the story. How often are we like the crowd? We praise Jesus when things are going well, but when following Him becomes difficult, we hesitate or turn away. When faith requires sacrifice, when forgiveness is hard, when love demands something from us, we struggle. We may not say “Crucify Him” with our words, but sometimes our actions, our choices, and our indifference can say the same.

Today, Jesus invites us to a deeper commitment. He does not want temporary followers who praise Him only in moments of joy. He calls us to be faithful disciples who will walk with Him not only in glory, but also in suffering. He asks us to carry our crosses, to remain faithful in difficult times, to choose love even when it is costly. This is not easy, but it is the path that leads to true life.

As we begin this Holy Week, let us not remain on the surface of these celebrations. Let us enter into them with our hearts. Let us walk with Jesus from the joy of Palm Sunday to the pain of Good Friday, so that we may also share in the joy of Easter. Let us ask for the grace to remain faithful, to stand with Him, and to love as He loves.

And so, we carry this question into our prayer: When my faith becomes difficult and demands sacrifice, will I remain with Jesus, or will I turn away? Have a prayerful and peaceful Holy Week.

Happy Palm Sunday!