



RELATING PALM SUNDAY READINGS TO OUR EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATIONS!

It is mandatory that a cross with corpus, a crucifix, be prominently displayed near the altar where the liturgy of Eucharist is celebrated in our churches. A crucifix is carried at the head of every liturgical procession. There are often one or more crucifixes in our homes. We trace the sign of the cross on the forehead of a candidate or infant seeking the sacrament of baptism. We use holy water, making the sign of the cross when we enter the church and remember our baptism that celebrated our initial entry into the church. Sacramental anointings are done with the sign of the cross. Many of us wear a cross or crucifix either inside or outside our clothing. There is a crucifix hanging from every set of rosary beads. More likely than not, we begin and end our formal prayers or shared prayers with the sign of the cross. The road to the resurrection must pass through Calvary.

Jesus is eager to eat the Passover with us. He wants to feed us and turn us slowly into himself. Paul tells us we must have the same attitude toward life and death as Jesus has. We sang hosanna and are carrying palm branches that have become a sign of martyrdom. As disciples, we want to accompany Jesus all the way to the cross and, in accord with the Letter to the Philippians, proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, the Lord of history and Lord of our lives. We began our celebration today with the sign of the cross.

Peter denied Jesus for the third time and looked up to see Jesus looking him in the eye. In the sacrament of reconciliation and in the penitential rite as we begin Mass, Jesus is looking us directly in the eye. He loves us, as he does Peter, and invites us to come, follow him.

Like Isaiah, we must be attentive to God's word everyday. God opens our ears that we may sense his call deep in our hearts. The passion narrative is recognized as the most significant part of the Gospels. The very core of the Christian faith is expressed in these chapters: the suffering, death, service and ultimately the resurrection. We will hear this narrative again on Friday of this Holy Week. Every disciple must be prepared to suffer.

Our stewardship is presented and the table is prepared with the bread and wine. These elements represent us who are to be consecrated, to be transformed in communion with Jesus. Viewing the corpus on the cross, we remember that we are the Body of Christ stretching out our arms to embrace the world and all that God is creating. Jesus, assuring us that we can drink the cup that he will drink, encourages us to take the bread and to take the cup. Our "Amen" recognizes that we are the Body of Christ. Each time we celebrate, we anticipate the eternal banquet to which we are called.

Jesus' whole life proclaims the Sermon on the Mount to us. The crucifixion is how the world punishes the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus repeatedly tells us, "Do not be afraid!" The message to disciples from the cross on this Palm Sunday as we begin Holy Week, is, in the words of the Benedictine Sebastian Moore, "Go for life, it will cost you everything, but you will be changed, will utterly surprise yourself, and change the world."

We go for life when we receive Christ in holy communion. United with him, we are able to live out his crucifixion and resurrection in the way he wants.

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.....Luke 19:28-40



Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.