



Homily for
PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION
19/20 March, 2016

Fr. Dwayne's homily follows....

I. From a Catholic devotional point of view, Palm Sunday ranks right up there with

Ash Wednesday – and perhaps even the Feast of St. Blaise!

- that's because when we come to these celebrations we “get” something!

- on Ash Wednesday, of course, we get ashes

- today we get palms – something to take home as a reminder of what we
have just celebrated

II. But Palm Sunday is also different because it's a “whole body” experience: we
put our *whole* body into this.

- we don't just stay in the pew and sit and kneel and stand, but we enter into

a procession: we step out of the pew, into the procession with Jesus and join
him as he moves through the drama of this holy week

- we become part of the crowd today by taking our place in the reading of
the Passion and begin to feel the chaos of that day

- it is so good and healthy to put our *bodies* into this: to take an active part

and join with Jesus in his passion, death – and next Sunday – his resurrection!

III. I encourage you to immerse yourself into the events of this week: don't let this week be just like any other week.

- whether you are retired or have a full work day; single or married; adult or youth; alone or with family – find time this week to make it different

- look for opportunities that pull you into the continuing procession of this week:

- check the TV listings for movies and programs about Holy Week
- screen a video you have or rent a Holy Week movie
- listen to Catholic radio
- I'm sure EWTN will carry the papal liturgies in Rome as well as provide other programming
- most importantly of all: participate in the parish's liturgies of this week – we have a full schedule for Holy Week: make time to be an active participant. Parents: bring your children and help them to learn and come to know Jesus in a new way through the days of this week.

IV. As you immerse yourself into the journey of this week, ask yourself: which character or characters do you identify with?

- are you one of the disciples: startled and uncomfortable by the events swirling around you? Are you, at times, hesitant about continuing to follow Jesus and at other times filled with love and faith?
- are you Peter: Peter who betrayed Jesus and yet found within himself the humility to reach out to Jesus seeking forgiveness and salvation?

- are you Veronica: filled with compassion to wipe the faces of those you love who suffer?
- are you one of the women of Jerusalem: troubled by injustice and suffering today? Does your heart reach out in agony and frustration as you see all the neglected needs of the world?
- are you Simon of Cyrene: feeling like you are forced to carry someone else's burden – or questioning why it always seems like it is you who must perform certain tasks?
- are you Pilate: indecisive, unable to make decisions for what is right – allowing yourself to be pushed around by the will of others or the pressures of our permissive society?
- are you the good thief: who recognized his own sinfulness and looked beyond it to the saving power of God?
- are you Mary: one who must witness the sufferings and struggles of your children? Sometimes feeling helpless in the face of tragedy?

V. And most importantly of all: are you Jesus?

What does it mean to walk with Jesus? Throughout this week, we are invited to place ourselves into the drama of this week and take our place with all of these characters. Most especially, we are invited to walk with Jesus and learn from him the full meaning of dying to oneself so that we might bring forth greater life in the world. How can I live Jesus' deep love with all those who fill my life?

The procession we enter into today does not end on Saturday or Sunday. It continues each day of our lives. Take that palm home with you – place in a prominent place in your home – and allow it to remind you throughout the year that you are called to be Jesus – to live and love as Jesus – every day of the year.

Fr. Kyle's homily follows....

Today we hear about Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem amidst cheering crowds and waving palm branches. There are numerous parallels between this Palm Sunday even and what we experience ever weekend at mass. I would like to look at 3 of them:

1. Hosanna: Our reading at the beginning of mass tells us that the people cheered and praised God as Jesus was coming saying, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest". If that sounds familiar that is because we sing these words every mass. Just before the Eucharistic prayer, just before we kneel down for the Eucharistic prayer we sing this words rejoicing that Jesus is about to come into our presence in this church. Think about how excited the people would have been on that first Palm Sunday welcoming their messiah into Jerusalem. Are we that excited when we sing these words and welcome Jesus at the mass?

2. Simplicity and humility: Jesus, while being the messiah and the King of Kings, does not come into Jerusalem in luxury and splendor. He comes in simply riding on a donkey; a donkey that was borrowed from someone else. Because of this, there were many who did not recognize him as the messiah or savior. Likewise comes to us at mass, not in splendor, but in the simplicity of bread and wine. When we look at the Eucharist, do we recognize that it is Jesus, the Son of God that we receive? Do we truly believe this when we say "Amen"?

3. Going up: Finally, we hear that Jesus proceeds on his journey "up" to Jerusalem. Not only is this true geographically as Galilee is a significantly lower altitude than Jerusalem; but it is a spiritual reality as well. Jesus is going up to Jerusalem where he will be lifted "up" on the cross and eventually raised "up" on the third day into heaven. When we look at our church building, we see an actual physical ascent "up" steps into the sanctuary where the Eucharist will be offered "up" for us on the altar. But it is also spiritually true for us too. We come "up" to the altar so that we might be united with Jesus in the Eucharist as he takes us "up" with him in the ascent of his cross and resurrection.

Today we actually participate in the reality of Jesus entering into our lives as he did on that first Palm Sunday. We praise and sing Hosanna to welcome him, we recognize him in the humble appearance of bread and wine, and we are united and taken up with him in his ascent to the

cross and resurrection. At this mass, and every mass, may we truly enter into the saving mystery of Christ which is not just a historical event that happened 2000 years ago but is happening here and now right before us.