

**FOR THE WEEKEND OF MARCH 27 - 28, 2021**

Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion

**Gospel reading at the Procession with Palms (Palm Sunday, Lectionary 37 and 38)**

Mk 11:1-10

When Jesus and his disciples drew near to Jerusalem,  
to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives,  
he sent two of his disciples and said to them,  
“Go into the village opposite you,  
and immediately on entering it,  
you will find a colt tethered on which no one has ever sat.  
Untie it and bring it here.  
If anyone should say to you,  
‘Why are you doing this?’ reply,  
‘The Master has need of it  
and will send it back here at once.’”  
So they went off  
and found a colt tethered at a gate outside on the street,  
and they untied it.  
Some of the bystanders said to them,

“What are you doing, untying this colt?”  
They answered them just as Jesus had told them to,  
and they permitted them to do it.  
So they brough the colt to Jesus  
and put their cloaks over it.  
And he sat on it.  
Many people spread their cloaks on the road,  
and others spread leafy branches  
that they had cut from the fields.  
Those preceding him as well as those following kept crying out:  
“Hosanna!  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come!  
Hosanna in the highest!”

**Homily helper / connection to stewardship / giving / charity / almsgiving**

* Humanity is fickle.
  + Always surreal that in the same Palm Sunday Mass, we read from the Gospel how the people of Jerusalem celebrated Jesus as the Messiah…only to call for His death a few days later.
  + We’re no different. That’s why we hold the palms! Lent’s probably been a good indication of that. Bold resolutions, followed by failure and corner-cutting.
* But God is constant.
  + We come to Mass not to focus on our sins and weaknesses. We know we are sinful and weak.
  + Instead, we come, year in and year out, to celebrate the steadfast love of God. To receive His strength. To learn to love and give as He did.
* Entering into Holy Week.
  + Let us be sorry for our sins, our fickleness, our inconsistency, and mourn the death of Jesus
  + …but let us also be grateful and joyful for His saving love, as powerful today, this Mass, as it was back then on Calvary.
  + And let us show our gratitude by picking up our Cross, and following Him in the way of self-giving Love.

**Intercession**

For our Annual Diocesan Appeal, that we might all support it generously, strengthening our ability to share the constancy of God’s love with the world.

**Copy for bulletin announcement**

Palm Sunday is never just “Palm Sunday.” It also always includes the Lord’s Passion. By juxtaposing both of these Gospel scenes in the same Mass, the Church is forcing us to consider a hard truth: we are a fickle people. Just as the people of Jerusalem praised Jesus, only to turn on Him a few days later, we too might claim Jesus as our Lord, but constantly turn from Him through our sins and self-centeredness. For many of us, we get a heavy dose of our weakness during Lent, when we begin with bold resolutions but so often come up short.

But our shortcomings aren’t the focus of the readings today. Instead, the focus is on the steadfast love and constancy of Jesus Christ. Jesus knows we are fickle. Just like He knew that by coming into Jerusalem, despite the people’s praises, He was handing Himself over to death. And yet, in the words of the Prophet Isaiah, he set his face “like flint” and was obedient to His mission of self-giving love. He knew that so many would abandon Him, and yet He chose at every moment to persist, all the way to Calvary. Jesus also knows that you and I fail. That we turn our backs on Him in ways little and small. And yet He continues to make His love available to us today, holding back nothing.

As we enter into Holy Week, let this be our focus: that no matter how many times we’ve failed this Lent, and no matter how often we turn away from Christ, His Love for us is as constant and pure as it was when He first took up the Cross. During these days leading up to Good Friday, let’s experience contrition for our sins, remorse for our mistakes, but also incredible gratitude for Christ’s saving Love. And let’s show our gratitude by picking up our Cross and following Him in the way of self-giving love. One way we can do so, as Lent comes to a close, is to consider supporting the Annual Diocesan Appeal as a final act of Lenten almsgiving.

**Copy for pulpit announcement**

As we enter into Holy Week, it means our Lenten season is coming to a close. Please consider supporting the Annual Diocesan Appeal as a final act of Lenten almsgiving, uniting your sacrifice to Christ’s on the Cross.

**Social media post/content**

Photo: Palms in a cross, “Rejoice in the Lord!”

Copy: We’re in the Lenten homestretch. Consider supporting the Annual Diocesan Appeal as a final act of Lenten almsgiving.