

# Palm Sunday



## Understanding Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday, also called Passion Sunday, marks the start of Holy Week. We hear Mark's story of Jesus' Passion. But first, at the start of Mass, we listen to the story of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. As he rode a donkey in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, people threw palm branches and their cloaks before him, celebrating him as a king. They happily hailed him this day, but within five days would call for his crucifixion.

## Open the Word

*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!" (Mark 11:8-9)*

- **Read the full account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem:** Mark 11:1-10.
- **Read today's Passion:** Mark 14:1-15:47

## Holy Week in Your Home

"Before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times." In today's Gospel reading, we hear Peter deny Jesus three times. Peter recognized his sin in betraying Jesus, and "he broke down and wept" in remorse (Mark 14:72). Jesus loved and forgave Peter.

Asking for and granting forgiveness is something that gets easier with practice. If there are children in your home, practicing forgiveness as a family is the best way to teach God's love and mercy. Is there someone from whom you need to ask forgiveness? Is there someone who needs to hear "I forgive you" from you?

## For Children

Think of a time when you said you were sorry, and you were forgiven. How did forgiveness make you feel? Draw a picture of how it feels when you know you are loved and forgiven.

**Activity:** How to make a [palm cross](#).

## Did You Know?

In the United States, many Catholic churches cover images and crosses beginning on the Fifth Sunday of Lent until the Easter Vigil. The veiled statues capture our notice and heighten our anticipation for Easter Sunday. They focus our attention on the holiness of the season and the powerful message being proclaimed in the Gospels. The veils also remind us of our lives in faith and our hope in what is to come:

*"At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face."*  
(1 Corinthians 13:12)

## Spiritual Reading

"This was not the first time that the people recognized Christ as the king they expected. It had already happened after the miraculous multiplication of the loaves, when the crowd wanted to carry him in triumph. Jesus knew, however, that his kingdom was not of this world; for this reason, he had fled from their enthusiasm. He now sets out for Jerusalem to face the trial that awaits him. He is aware that he is going there for the last time, for a 'holy' week, at the end of which, the passion, cross and death await him. He faces all this with complete willingness, knowing that in this way the Father's eternal plan will be fulfilled in him. "Since that day, the Church throughout the world has repeated the words of the crowd in Jerusalem: 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' She repeats it every day while celebrating the Eucharist, shortly before the consecration. She repeats it with particular emphasis today, Palm Sunday."

~Homily by Pope St. John Paul II for Palm Sunday, St. Peter's Square, March 23, 1997

## Let Us Pray

Heavenly Father, Grant us the grace to walk alongside Jesus in this Holy Week, to embrace the path of humility, sacrifice, and redemption. May the palm branches we hold be a symbol of our commitment to follow Christ, our King, with unwavering devotion and love. Strengthen our faith, deepen our compassion, and fill us with the courage to forgive and to ask for forgiveness. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Faith in Action

Our faith teaches us to welcome the stranger as we would welcome Jesus. Ponder who is welcomed or denied welcome in our society. Consider donating time or material goods to a refugee resettlement ministry or homeless shelter in your community.



The Roman Catholic  
Archdiocese of Washington