

March 28, 2021

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

Is 50:4-7

Phil 2:6-11

Mk 14:1—15:47 or

Mk 15:1-39

GROW: From early childhood, I remember Palm Sunday – there was a kind of excitement about receiving the fresh palms, followed by the somber reading of the Passion. The contrast strikes me: While the palms, in ancient times, symbolized goodness and victory, hope and triumph, the account of Jesus' suffering and death reminds us of the price he paid for our redemption. Jesus knew that we can't have one without the other. It is the paradox of the cross: Jesus gave his life so that we might live. For many, the past year has been like one long Good Friday, filled with discouragement, suffering, and loss. As we reflect on Jesus' passion, the palms we carry home remain a sign of hope; we know now how the story will end. As we place our palms in a special place, let us say a prayer of thanks to Jesus and ask for the grace to renew our faith and trust in God as we enter Holy Week.

GO: There is a richness in the liturgies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil that are both humbling and uplifting. This time period, known as the Sacred Triduum (Latin for "three days") is the official end of Lent, and the summit of the liturgical year. As a society, we give far more attention to the buildup and celebration of Christmas – which is not to deny its importance, of course! – and so sometimes the Triduum is not as familiar to people in both its meaning and importance. Yet, it is during these days that we most intentionally remember and celebrate the gift of our redemption; we liturgically embrace the paschal mystery of Christ: dying he destroyed our death, and rising he restored our life. We have faced a difficult year together, and we rely on each other for prayer. As we continue through this Holy Week, perhaps we can accompany each other by attending the services with one another, or at least setting aside complementary prayer time on our own.

PRAY: A local Eagle Scout built a beautiful outdoor Stations of the Cross at a college campus near us. Visit your parish or outdoor stations and reflect on each one. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has excellent resources for praying the stations: www.usccb.org.