



# Hosanna



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THE PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY

Year B

“Follow Jesus in good times and in bad with selflessness and love”

It is easy to follow Jesus when we are one among the palm-carrying crowd which He leads triumphantly into Jerusalem. We don't need to stand out or be singled out for it, it is a comfortable and exhilarating experience. However, it is a hard thing to follow Him when He is being condemned as a criminal, tortured and crucified. We will be ignored, harassed and taunted. As we begin the Holy Week with Palm Sunday, we remember that among the multitude of those who surrounded Jesus with praise and admiration only a handful stayed with him up to the Cross on Good Friday. As we celebrate this Eucharist, we are being strengthened to be his disciples who follow Jesus in self-giving love up to the Cross. Let us ask forgiveness for the times we have given in to selfishness and pride.

### Blessings of Palms and Solemn Procession to the Church

#### ANTIPHON

Give me justice, O God, and plead my Hosanna to the Son of David, the king of Israel, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Mt.21:9)

**Celebrant:** Dear brethren, since the beginning of Lent until now we have prepared our hearts by penance and charitable works. Today we gather together to herald with

the whole Church the beginning of the celebration of our Lord's Paschal Mystery, that is to say, of his Passion and Resurrection. For it was to accomplish this mystery that he entered his own city of Jerusalem. Therefore, with all faith and devotion, let us commemorate the Lord's entry into the city for our salvation, following in his footsteps, so that, being made by his grace partakers of the Cross, we may have a share also in his Resurrection and in his life.

### THE BLESSING OF PALMS

**Let us pray:** Almighty ever-living God, sanctify ✠ these branches with your blessing, that we, who follow Christ the King in exultation, may reach the eternal Jerusalem through him. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

*(The priest sprinkles the branches with holy water)*

### PROCLAMATION OF THE LORD'S COMING

**A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Mark 11:1-10**

When they 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 as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, ‘Why

are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately'." And they went away, and found a colt tied at the door out in the open street; and they untied it. And those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" And they told them what Jesus had said; and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and threw their garments on it; and he sat upon it. And many spread their garments on the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed cried out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is coming! Hosanna in the highest!"

### *The Gospel of the Lord*

## **THE PROCESSION TO THE CHURCH**

**Celebrant:** Dear brothers and sisters, like the crowds who acclaimed Jesus in Jerusalem, let us go forth in peace.

*(During the procession, the choir and the people sing appropriate hymns)*

## **COLLECT**

By your help, we beseech you, Lord Almighty ever-living God, who as an example of humility for the human race to follow caused our Saviour to take flesh and submit to the Cross, graciously grant that we may heed his lesson of patient suffering and so merit a share in his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

## **FIRST READING**

*The first reading is taken from the middle section of the Book of Isaiah. The prophet looks forward to a time in the future when God's chosen*

*people will begin to live up to their true potential through the coming of a virtuous messiah who would have to suffer unjustly on behalf of wicked sinners and yet would rise from it victorious. Jesus is that Messiah, and we are those wicked sinners, and the victory of Israel foreshadows the victorious Resurrection of Christ.*

## **A reading from the Book of Isaiah**

**50:4-7**

The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word, him that is weary. Morning by morning he wakens, he wakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I turned not backward. I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been confounded; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.

### *The Word of the Lord*

## **Responsorial Psalm (22)**

**R. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**

All who see me deride me. They curl their lips, they toss their heads. "He trusted in the Lord, let him save him; let him release him if this is his friend."

**R. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**

Many dogs have surrounded me, a band of the wicked beset me. They tear holes in my hands and my feet. I can count every one of my bones.

**R. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**

They divide my clothing among them. They cast lots for my robe. O Lord, do not leave me alone, my strength, make haste to help me!

**R. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**

I will tell of your name to my brethren and praise you where they are assembled. "You who fear the Lord give him praise; all sons of Jacob, give him glory. Revere him, Israel's sons."

**R. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**

**SECOND READING**

*In the second reading, St. Paul is filled with a sense of gratitude for what God has done for us in the sacrifice of Christ. He explains to the church at Philippi that In Jesus, the perfect human being was rendering perfect obedience to the Holy God and the Holy God was opening up the door for human nature to be raised to the level of divinity by an amazing act of selfless and self-giving love.*

**A reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Philippians 2:6-11**

Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

***The Word of the Lord***

**ACCLAMATION (Phil 2:8-9)**

Christ became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed

on him the name which is above every name.

**GOSPEL READING**

**The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Mark**

**14:1–15:47**

It was now two days before the Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest Jesus by stealth, and kill him; for they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be a tumult of the people."

And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the jar and poured it over his head. But there were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment thus wasted? For this ointment might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and given to the poor." And they reproached her. But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you will, you can do good to them; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burying. And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. And when they heard it they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought an opportunity to betray him.

And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?"

And he sent two of his disciples, and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the householder, 'The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I am to eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us." And the disciples set out and went to the city, and found it as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

And when it was evening he came with the twelve. And as they were at table eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." They began to be sorrowful, and to say to him one after another, "Is it I?" He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread in the same dish with me. For the Son of man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I say to you, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." But he

said vehemently, "If I must die with you, I will not deny you." And they all said the same.

And they went to a place which was called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I pray." And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch." And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt." And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer him. And he came the third time, and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour has come; the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

And immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I shall kiss is the man; seize him and lead him away safely." And when he came, he went up to him at once, and said, "Master!" And he kissed him. And they laid hands on him and seized him. But one of those who stood by drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. And Jesus

said to them, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled." And they all forsook him, and fled.

And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body; and they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.

And they led Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes were assembled. And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, and warming himself at the fire. Now the chief priests and the whole council sought testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. For many bore false witness against him, and their witness did not agree. And some stood up and bore false witness, against him, saying, "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'" Yet not even so did their testimony agree. And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" But he was silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus said, "I am; and you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." And the high priest tore his mantle, and said, "Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?" And they all condemned him as deserving death. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophecy!" And the guards received him with blows.

And as Peter was below in the

courtyard, one of the maids of the high priest came; and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said, "You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus." But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you mean." And he went out into the gateway. And the maid saw him, and began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." But again he denied it. And after a little while again the bystanders said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean." But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know this man of whom you speak." And immediately the cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.

And as soon as it was morning the chief priests, with the elders and scribes, and the whole council held a consultation; and they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him to Pilate. And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." And the chief priests accused him of many things. And Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you." But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate wondered.

Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner whom they asked. And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he was wont to do for them. And he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for

them Barabbas instead. And Pilate again said to them, "Then what shall I do with the man whom you call the King of the Jews?" And they cried out again, "Crucify him." And Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him." So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas; and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the praetorium); and they called together the whole battalion. And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on him. And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck his head with a reed, and spat upon him, and they knelt down in homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.

And they compelled a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mingled with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. And it was the third hour, when they crucified him. And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right hand and one on his left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!" So also the chief priests mocked him to one another with the scribes saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself.

Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" Which means, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Behold, he is calling Elijah." And one ran and, filling a sponge full of vinegar, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that he thus breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Younger and of Joses, and Salome, who, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered to him; and also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And Pilate wondered if he were already dead, and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. And he bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock; and

he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.

## **HOMILY**

### **NICENE CREED**

#### **PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL**

**Celebrant:** In this we know that God loves us that while we were still sinners, Christ gave himself up for our sakes. With gratitude in our hearts and a sincere desire to order our lives by this love let us confidently place our praise and petitions before the Lord as we say:

**Response: Lord, teach us Your way of selfless love.**

1. For our Holy Father the Pope, Bishops, priests and religious that open to the promptings of God's Holy Spirit of selfless love they may lead the Church to a more committed service to the spiritually, morally and materially abandoned people of our times. Let us pray to the Lord.

2. For all Christian marriages, that inspired by the selfless love of Christ for his Bride the Church, husbands and wives may be strengthened to renew their self-gift to each other in day-to-day acts of sacrifice and mutual support for themselves and their children. Let us pray to the Lord.

3. For Christian parents, that inspired by the Lord who willingly suffered out of love for our sakes, they may be strengthened to do what is best for their children to bring them up in Christian faith and moral virtue even when this sometimes means becoming unpopular with their children. Let us pray to the Lord.

4. For children, that recognizing the selfless love of God manifested to them through their parents, they may return love for love through their affection and obedience when they are little and their respect and care

when they are grown up. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Celebrant:** Lord, we know that our sins add more pain and burden to your suffering. But you always love us with an unconditional love. Bless us that we may be always be faithful to your sacrificial love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### **PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Through the Passion of your Only Begotten Son, O Lord, may our reconciliation with you be near at hand, so that, though we do not merit it by our own deeds, yet by this sacrifice made once for all, we may feel already the effects of your mercy. Through Christ our Lord.

#### **PREFACE (Palm Sunday)**

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For, though innocent, he suffered willingly for sinners and accepted unjust condemnation to save the guilty. His Death has washed away our sins, and his Resurrection has purchased our justification.

And so, with all the Angels, we praise you, as in joyful celebration we acclaim:

**All:** *Holy, Holy, Holy...*

#### **COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

Father, if this chalice cannot pass without my drinking it, your will be done. (*Mt 26:42*)

#### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Nourished with these sacred gifts, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, just as through the death of your Son you have brought us to hope for what we believe, so by his Resurrection you may lead us to where you call. Through Christ our Lord.

## REFLECTION

Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday marks the beginning of the Holy Week. A week-long celebration in which we remember with gratitude the great sacrifice that God made out of his passionate love for us in order to save us. God could have saved us by the snap of a finger if God wanted to. But, just as the-man-in-the-queue had no obligation to help out the seven-year-old boy, there was no reason for God to become one like us, suffer and die like us in order to save us. But just like the-man-in-the-queue, God freely chose to empty himself for us to lift us up from the poverty of selfishness and sin, so that being enriched by God's selflessness and love we should follow Jesus in selflessly giving life to others.

How did Jesus practice selflessness and love from his triumphant entry into Jerusalem and all the way up to the Cross? What does he teach us by his example? We can pick up at least five lessons.

1. From Jesus' attitude towards the people who welcomed and praised him with palms in Jerusalem: Jesus teaches us to do good to please God not human beings. Beware of doing good only for the sake of human praise because it can easily turn into criticism.

2. From Jesus' response to Pilate's question about his true identity: Jesus teaches us to overcome doubt with faith not explanations. We need not immediately respond to people's externally expressed doubts about faith,

but to their innermost unexpressed belief that without God in their lives life would be meaningless.

3. From Jesus' silence at the mockery of the soldiers: Jesus teaches to relate to God in love from the heart not only with the lips. We shouldn't be surprised if God doesn't answer our prayers if we make a mockery of prayer and a pretence out of worship by the way we carelessly take the name of God in vain or mindlessly rattle out prayers.

4. From Jesus' acceptance of Simon the Cyrene's help: Jesus teaches us that selflessness also means being willing to receive not always insisting on giving. Loving others also means being able to accept others' love and help when we need it.

5. Lastly, from the last cries that Jesus issued from the Cross: Jesus tells us, "Even if the whole world wrongly condemns you, makes fun of you, or thinks you are useless – I think you are worth all the pain, all the abandonment and all the shame that I experienced on the Cross in order to give you the gift of new life through my Spirit." If this is what God has done for us, if this is what Jesus says to us from the Cross, can you imagine how precious you and I are to God? (Every single person is a masterpiece-in-the-making. God never makes junk. So don't treat people like it!)

- **Rev. Fr. Sandeep Menezes, C.Ss.R.**

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