

NEVER GIVE UP!

Today is the 6th and last Sunday of Lent, the Sunday before Easter which formally commences the Holy Week. On this day the Church commemorates Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem when olive and palm branches were strewn in his path to accomplish his paschal mystery. In many ways, Palm Sunday is the overture to Holy Week since it contains all the themes to be emphasized from this day to the following Sunday. The events of the passion narrative that will be read will also be broken and reflected into different bits within the week.

However, the most distinctive ceremonies of the day are the **blessing of the palms, the procession, and the reading of the passion**. The red vestment worn by the presider today symbolizes the royalty of Christ, which this feast celebrates. Our celebration today prefigures our anticipated triumphal entry into the heavenly Jerusalem as Christ leads on. By his death he destroyed death and by his rising, he restored our life. The procession is not a mere triumphal march, but as Christ's journey together with his people to Calvary and the great act of redemption. By joyful entrance in this liturgy, we identify with Christ's disposition to accept the cross for our salvation

The Gospel passion we read describes the humility, the determination, and the perseverance of Jesus in the face of his suffering, which the 1st reading and the 2nd reading point out in different ways. In Jesus' suffering, we see different types of sufferings we face in our lives- the sufferings of denial, betrayal, abandonment, fear, anxiety, mockery, and physical suffering, but in all these Jesus trusted in God for strength to accomplish his mission. Thus, in our reflection of this passion, we pray for the grace to imitate Jesus his attitudes towards his sufferings. Let this Holy Week help us to reflect more on the sufferings of Christ, as they relate to us in different ways, and never to give up in our life struggles, but always trust in God as Jesus did. Amen.

“God saved us by serving us. We often think we are the ones who serve God. No, he is the one who freely chose to serve us, for he loved us first. It is difficult to love and not be loved in return. And it is even more difficult to serve if we do not let ourselves be served by God”
(Pope Francis Homily, Palm Sunday, 2020)