

**March 28, 2021 – Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion:**

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/032821.cfm>

Mk 11:1-10

Is 50:4-7

Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

Phil 2:6-11

Mk 14:1—15:47

*By Fr. Ako Walker, CSSR*

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week and heralds Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem. If Jesus was truly king of heaven and earth, then his presence in Jerusalem was highly significant since it was considered the most sacred place on earth. We are already aware of His divine origin. Solomon’s temple, the First Temple was built in Jerusalem as a house for God’s presence. Long before Jesus’ arrival some 600 years prior, the prophet Zechariah announced this entry: *“Exult greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem! Behold: your king is coming to you, a just savior is he, Humble, and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”* (9:9)

The First and Second Readings of Palm Sunday bring us face to face with Jesus’ eventual suffering but also with his humility. Isaiah tells us *“I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who tore out my beard; My face I did not hide from insults and spitting.”* (50:6) Coupled with this, Paul tells us that, *“His state was divine, yet Christ did not cling to his equality with God, but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are, he was humble even to accepting death on a cross.”* (Philippians 2:5-6) I do not know that I could have tolerated such abuse in silence without fighting back. I suppose and have come to believe that Jesus’ actions and response were appropriate since He was doing it all for love. Love does not think of Love’s self rather Love thinks of the other. Love perseveres and is patient and kind and exercises self-control.

There is so much symbolism as we re-enact the procession of Jesus into Jerusalem during the Palm Sunday Liturgy. The palms, the crowds, the singing. While growing up I was told that the same crowd that was singing *Hosanna to the King of Kings* and waving palms as Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem was the same crowd that shouted: *Crucify Him! Crucify Him*. When I first heard this, I was troubled! Surely, not I Lord! Do I really betray Jesus like this? Do I betray others by my silence and lack of action in the face of injustices? When I do not speak up for those who are marginalized and suffering, am I crucifying them? As I make this journey, this procession on Palm Sunday each year, how am I called to be in solidarity with those who do not have a voice of their own because they were silenced by the powerful forces in the society?

The truth is that we could perform all the Liturgy of the Church on these most sacred days but if we are not embodying the words then it is all in vain. If we are remaining passive and actionless then

we are complicit and in collusion with those who do not want a just society. This is why Jesus had to give His body and blood for the salvation of the world. Although his words were enough, Jesus just had to go the extra mile to demonstrate to us that it was all or nothing.

This year because of Covid there might be no processions on Palm Sunday. How might this be a time for us to process inside of our hearts and ask the Lord for the grace to walk in solidarity with those who need us to speak up for them on the many issues that confront our society? We usually start the liturgy outside however we begin inside this year. I think the Lord may be inviting us to look within, deep inside our hearts, the Jerusalem of our beings, and to use our voices and bodies to help build the reign of God on the earth.

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