

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion



As Jesus approached the climb toward Calvary, he humbly entered Jerusalem where his disciples were directed to prepare an upper room to celebrate the Passover feast, a Jewish tradition. We refer to this particular meal shared by our Lord and his disciples as the Last Supper.

This story is told in this week's Sunday Gospel Reading as we celebrate Palm Sunday. If you have an opportunity, spend time reading through chapters 14 and 15 of Mark's Gospel before hearing it at mass on Sunday. Service, surrender, and steadfast commitment are just a few of many themes that can be explored within these two chapters.

Christ's disciples are sent in service to prepare the way of his passion. In doing so, they show us how to participate in the Paschal Mystery in whatever way is put in front of us at the time. Sometimes preparing a room or a meal, if it is God's will for us in the moment, is fulfilling our call as a Christian.

When the meal ended, Jesus and his disciples moved onward. While inviting Peter and others to stay awake in prayer, Jesus retreated on his own to pray:

*Abba, father, all things are possible to you.
Take this cup away from me,
But not what I will but what you will.*

This powerful prayer shows Jesus's honest expression of pain, trust, surrender, and willingness to complete his mission. We can hope to make the same kind of humble surrender in matters big and small, simply by praying, "Thy will, not mine, be done." It may need to be repeated often, but no set of circumstances is too small to invite God to be a part of.

Jesus is condemned, accused, and betrayed by nearly all who he comes across in the final days of his life. Throughout this time, his empathy remains strong and his steadfast commitment to his mission is not altered. His body becomes weak but his spirit is full of life and love until his last breath.

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Now is a great time to renew our faith in Christ by serving others, surrendering obediently, and remaining steadfast in the commitment we've made to our recovery and spiritual way of life. As men, this might appear counter-cultural, but we know that a life of freedom and happiness cannot exist if we remain focused on ourselves and dependent on lust.

The devotions we have crafted over Lent can spring us into fuller relationship with God as we take action on working through the Twelve Steps. We will be invited to reaffirm our sacramental vows during the Easter celebration where we will unify our faith with the newly baptized.

Is there something you set your sights on during Lent that you have yet to complete? Perhaps that is an amends you've planned to make, a visit to the sacrament of Confession, or some merciful action that has yet to be done.

If your cross seems too heavy to carry on your own, reach out for help. In a moment of difficulty, bring the passion of Christ to mind and prayerfully recite the words, "Thy will, not mine, be done." Honest recognition of our situation through prayer invites Jesus to walk with us on our journey just as we accept his invitation to walk alongside him to Calvary.

- How have themes of service, surrender, and commitment been present throughout your Lenten journey?
- How has addiction recovery helped you develop empathy for others and unity through suffering?
- How are you carrying your cross today?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7

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

2nd Reading: Philippians 2:6-11

Gospel: Mark 14:1-15:47