

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Palm Sunday carries a powerful tension. The liturgy begins with celebration as crowds welcome Jesus into Jerusalem with shouts of praise. Yet within a short time, those same voices echo through the Passion narrative as Jesus is rejected, condemned, and led toward the cross. This movement from praise to suffering mirrors something many of us recognize in recovery.

Addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments often brought us through dramatic emotional swings. There may have been moments when life seemed manageable or even hopeful. Then suddenly everything collapsed again. Promises were broken and relationships were strained. We found ourselves overwhelmed by the consequences of choices we could not seem to stop making. Living this way left many of us exhausted and spiritually disoriented.

Palm Sunday invites us to walk closely with Jesus as He enters into His own suffering. The Passion narrative reveals that even those closest to Him struggled to remain faithful. At the Last Supper, Peter confidently promises unwavering loyalty, yet only hours later he denies even knowing Jesus. Many of the other disciples scatter in fear.

Recovery teaches us humility when we hear these moments in the gospel. We recognize how easily fear, pride, or isolation can lead us away from the truth. Before finding recovery, many of us insisted we could manage our situation on our own. We made promises to ourselves and to others that we sincerely wanted to keep. Yet without spiritual help, we often found ourselves repeating the same destructive patterns.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus reveals a different response to suffering. Knowing what lies ahead, He turns to the Father in prayer (Matthew 26:39):

He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will."

This prayer captures the heart of surrender. Jesus does not deny the weight of what He faces. He speaks honestly about His anguish, yet He ultimately entrusts everything to the Father's will.

Many people in recovery come to a similar turning point. We reach a place where our own efforts have failed and we are forced to admit that we cannot control everything. Step One invites us to acknowledge our powerlessness. Steps Two and Three guide us toward trusting that God can restore us and toward placing our will and lives into His care.

Surrender does not remove all difficulty from our lives. Just as Jesus still walks the road to Calvary, recovery does not promise a life free from struggle. Instead, it offers a new way of facing hardship. We are no longer alone, and we no longer rely solely on our own strength.

Palm Sunday reminds us that the path to resurrection passes through the cross. In recovery, we gradually learn that the painful truths we once tried to avoid can become places where God begins His healing work. Honest confession, making amends, and accepting responsibility may feel uncomfortable, but they open the door to freedom.

We also discover that we do not walk this journey alone. The fellowship of recovery provides encouragement, accountability, and shared hope. The sacraments nourish us with grace. Prayer connects us with the God who never abandons us, even in the darkest moments.

As Holy Week begins, we are invited to walk with Christ more intentionally. We bring our fears, struggles, and hopes

before God with the same humble prayer Jesus offered in the garden: "Not my will, but yours be done."

In that surrender, we discover that God can bring life even out of the places where we once felt completely defeated.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you experienced moments in your recovery where surrendering to God's will brought unexpected peace or clarity?

- Where do you notice resistance to letting go of control in your life right now?

- How are you experiencing God's presence in the difficult or uncomfortable parts of your recovery?

MASS READINGS

PALMS PROCESSION Matthew 21:1-11

FIRST READING Isaiah 50:4-7

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

SECOND READING Philippians 2:6-11

GOSPEL Matthew 26:14—27:66

