

# PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

**P**alm 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 family members and friends experience when loving someone who struggles with addiction.

There may have been seasons when things seemed hopeful. Promises were made, progress appeared possible, and relationships began to heal. Then suddenly everything changed again. Old behaviors returned, trust was shaken, and disappointment resurfaced. These cycles can leave us emotionally exhausted and unsure of what to expect next.

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.

For those impacted by a loved one's addiction, moments like these can stir up deep questions. Why did this happen again? Could I have done something differently? Should I keep hoping, or should I protect my heart? These questions often carry a heavy emotional weight.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus reveals a response to suffering that offers guidance for us as well. Facing 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."*

Jesus speaks honestly about His anguish while still entrusting Himself to the Father's will. This prayer can become a model for those walking alongside addiction. We can bring our fears, disappointments, and frustrations to God without pretending everything is fine. At the same time, we learn to release what we cannot control.

Family recovery often involves this shift. Instead of trying to manage another person's choices, we begin focusing on our own spiritual health and boundaries. We recognize that love does not mean taking responsibility for someone else's recovery. True care allows space for God to work in ways we cannot force.

That kind of surrender can feel uncomfortable. Letting go of control may initially feel like giving up. Yet over time we discover that surrender is not resignation but trust. It allows us to live with greater clarity and serenity even when circumstances remain uncertain.

Palm Sunday reminds us that suffering is not the final word in God's story. The road through Holy Week ultimately leads to resurrection. For many people affected by addiction, hope grows slowly and quietly through small daily acts of faith. Attending meetings, praying honestly, and connecting with supportive community members help us remain grounded.

We also learn that we are not alone. Just as the disciples eventually found their way back to one another after the chaos of the Passion, recovery communities provide companionship for the journey. We share our experiences, encourage one another, and remind each other that healing is possible.

As Holy Week begins, we are invited to walk with Christ through both sorrow and hope. We place the people we love into God's care while continuing to tend to our own recovery.

In that surrender, we discover a deeper peace that does not depend on controlling the future but on trusting the One who walks with us through every part of the journey.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have the ups and downs of a loved one's addiction affected your sense of hope or stability?  
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- What does surrendering control to God look like for you in your current situation?  
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- How are you experiencing God's presence as you care for yourself while loving someone who struggles with addiction?  
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## 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

