

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion



Service, surrender, and steadfast commitment to truth are all themes at the heart of the Gospel reading for Palm Sunday. A room has been prepared for Jesus and His disciples to celebrate the Passover feast, a Jewish tradition. We refer to this particular gathering as the Last Supper where Jesus established the Sacrament of the Eucharist:

*Then he took the bread, said the blessing,
broke it, and gave it to them, saying,
“This is my body, which will be given for you;
do this in memory of me.”
And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying,
“This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
which will be shed for you.”*

Knowing that the one who would betray Him was at the table, Jesus remained committed to the will of His Father. When the meal ended, Jesus and His disciples moved onward. While inviting Peter and others to stay awake in prayer, Jesus withdrew to his customary place of prayer – the Mount of Olives.

Last Sunday, we heard Jesus return from the same mountain to offer an adulterous woman mercy and new direction while scribes and Pharisees wanted her condemned. This Sunday, Jesus visits the Mount of Olives to bear the weight of darkness, knowing that He is the one to be condemned:

*He prayed, saying, “Father, if you are willing,
take this cup away from me;
still, not my will but yours be done.”
And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared
to him.
He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently
that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the
ground.*

This powerful prayer reflects Jesus’ honest expression of pain, trust, surrender, and His willingness to complete the mission given to Him. Those of us who grew up in alcoholic or dysfunctional homes may relate to this inner anguish—times when we felt overwhelmed, helpless, or burdened by roles and responsibilities we never chose. Like Jesus, we may have wished the “cup” of our experience could pass us by. Yet even in our brokenness, we can turn to God with the simple prayer: “Thy will, not mine, be done.” It may need to be repeated often, but nothing in our story is too small or too big to invite God into.

As Jesus walks His final steps, He is condemned, betrayed, misunderstood, and abandoned. For adult children of dysfunction, these wounds can feel familiar. Yet Jesus does not harden His heart—He remains tender, empathetic, and devoted to His purpose. Though His body weakens, His spirit stays strong, filled with love and mercy to the very end.

Palm Sunday invites us to renew our trust in Jesus by remaining faithful to our healing and recovery journey. The commitments we've made – whether to fellowship, prayer, therapy, or service – can carry us into deeper intimacy with God. The devotions we've nurtured during Lent help prepare our hearts for the transformation that Easter promises.

Through the Twelve Steps, we take action by naming our powerlessness and our need for a Savior. During Easter, we will be invited to renew our baptismal promises – just as we regularly recommit to living in recovery and welcoming the newcomer who reminds us of where we've been.

If your cross feels too heavy today, you don't need to carry it alone. Reach out for help. In moments of confusion or pain, enter into the passion of Christ and pray, "Thy will, not mine, be done." Honest prayer opens the door for our Savior to walk with us, even in the hardest moments. By uniting our suffering with His, we allow Jesus to transform our pain and help us carry our cross with grace.

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- Is there something you have set your sights on during Lent that you have yet to complete? Is there an amends to be made, a visit to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, or a spiritual work of mercy that has yet to be done?
- How do you share a message of hope with newcomers to recovery and to the Church?
- How do others in recovery and your church community help you carry your cross daily?

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First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7

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

Second Reading: Philippians 2:6-11

Gospel: Luke 22:14-23:56