

March 29, 2026—Palm Sunday

What a dramatic change between Palm Sunday and Good Friday. The Sacred Liturgy this Sunday mirrors that change. We began the Mass by blessing the palm branches and reading the Gospel of St. Matthew that told us about that first Palm Sunday. The people welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem, riding on a humble donkey, as a triumphant hero. They waved palm branches and shouted, “**Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest.**” The literal son of David was Solomon. When Solomon entered the city for his coronation as king, he rode on a humble donkey rather than a great stallion, and the people cheered him in a similar way that they cheered for Jesus.

At the beginning of Holy Mass, we began with the same spirit of joy that the people had on the first Palm Sunday, in Jesus as Lord and Savior. However, the mood quickly changed with the First Reading from the Prophet Isaiah. He prophesied about a man who said, “**I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting.**” Clearly, a prophecy about the sufferings of Jesus.

Then the Responsorial Psalm, Psalm 22, took up the theme as we repeated the words that began that psalm, “**My God, my God, why have You abandoned me.**” Those are one of the Seven Last Words of Jesus from the Cross. He quoted that psalm in His agony, but He also knew that the psalm that began in despair ended up in praise of God. God rescued the man when all seemed lost. Jesus knew that what appeared to be defeat on Good Friday would be turned into victory on Easter Sunday.

With the Passion of St. Matthew, we all had a part in reading the account of the suffering of Jesus. We heard about His betrayal by Judas at the Last Supper, the agony in the garden, His trials before the Sanhedrin and Pontius Pilate, all that He suffered in bearing the Cross and finally, His death upon it after 3 hours of agony. We also shouted with the crowds, “**Crucify Him, crucify Him.**” Those very crowds who shouted “blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” only five days before as they waved the palm branches changed their chant to “crucify him”.

There is a certain mob mentality that influences those who are not committed to anything except themselves. If you don't stand for something real and true, you fall for anything! Just as in the mobs on Good Friday, we see it today when protesters are interviewed and they don't really know why they are at a particular protest; they just followed the crowd on social media. Jesus doesn't want us to just

follow the crowd; He wants us to be committed to Him and the plan for our salvation that came through His death and resurrection. It is very possible to go through the motions of being a good Catholic without developing a personal relationship with Jesus, Our Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit. Even though God gave us the Catholic Church and the healing and strengthening power of the sacraments, we can still remain at a distance from Him.

This Holy Week is meant to help us draw closer to Jesus, our Savior. The Sacred Triduum, the three holy days, begin with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and continue until Easter Sunday evening.

Please make Good Friday different from every other day. Even if you are at work, you can pause to remember the death of Jesus at 3:00 pm or spend some of your lunchtime or breaktime in prayer. Otherwise, we shouldn't just make it a day of shopping or entertainment, especially in those three hours between noon and three o'clock. Perhaps you could read your Bible, watch a movie about Jesus, pray the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary or come to Church at 2:30 for the Stations of the Cross or pray them in your own home. Holy Week is meant for us to renew our commitment to Jesus and to follow in His footsteps as our Lord and Savior and Friend.