



PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

On Palm Sunday we commemorate Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem before the days of his passion and crucifixion. Great crowds had gathered to welcome the famous preacher and miracle worker from Galilee. How fickle people can be! In only a few days, many of that same crowd are shouting 'Crucify him', 'Crucify him!' as they demand of Pilate that Jesus be brutally put to death.

Scripture tells us

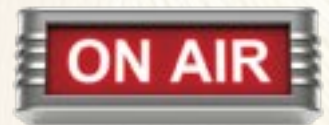
'When they were near Jerusalem and had come in sight of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives [...] Great crowds of people spread their cloaks on the road, while others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in his path. The crowds who went in front of him and those who followed were all shouting: 'Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest.' (Matthew 21:1-11)



Deepening our Participation in the Broadcast Celebration

Before the broadcast begins:

- Gather with other members of your household, if you can.
- Pick some green branches from your garden to represent the branches people waved on that first Palm Sunday. If you do not have access to a garden perhaps take some pieces of cloth to represent the cloaks the people of Jerusalem laid before Jesus. Place one of these in your sacred space and give one to each person present.
- Light the candle safely.



During the broadcast look out for the following:

- Normally, the Palm Sunday celebration begins with a reading from the Gospels describing Jesus' dramatic entry into Jerusalem. There follows a blessing of palm and olive branches and a solemn procession to the Church. This year, however, the ceremony may start instead with a **simple blessing of branches**. As this takes place hold your branch or piece of cloth aloft to be blessed.
- The **Readings** focus on Jesus' passion and death. The Prophet Isaiah paints a picture of the servant of God ready to suffer for the people. The Psalm is the one prayed by Jesus on the Cross: 'My God, my God why have you abandoned me!' The Second Reading from St Paul speaks of Jesus' ultimate exaltation, while in the Gospel we hear the traditional account of Jesus' Passion from Matthew.
- The Eucharist will be celebrated as normal. At communion time make an **Act of Spiritual Communion**. Invite Jesus to visit your heart, take some time to truly welcome his presence. He knows the lot of our human suffering. Ask him to be with all those who suffer at this time and to be with you, your family and our whole world.

A Prayer Ritual at Home

Gather around the sacred space with the other members of your household. If possible, take some green branches from your garden to represent the branches people waved on that first Palm Sunday. If you cannot gather some branches, perhaps take some pieces of cloth to represent the cloaks laid before Jesus on this entry to Jerusalem.



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we recall today your entry into Jerusalem those many years ago. The people waved branches and sang in welcome. As we prepare to walk with you through that first Holy Week, we pause to become aware of your presence and welcome you into our hearts (*Pause in Silence*)

Let us say together **'Hosanna, Hosanna in the Highest, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the Highest.'**

Reading

'And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him.' (From the Gospel of the day, full text Mt 26:14-27:66)

For the full text of the Gospel of the day visit.

(<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/readings/?feature=sunday>)

Reflection

Jesus enters Jerusalem. The liturgy invites us to share in the joy and celebration of the people who cry out in praise of their Lord; a joy that will fade and leaves a bitter and sorrowful taste by the end of the account of the Passion. This celebration seems to combine stories of joy and suffering, mistakes and successes, which are part of our daily lives as disciples. It somehow expresses the contradictory feelings that we too, the men and women of today, experience: the capacity for great love... but also for great hatred; the capacity for courageous self-sacrifice, but also the ability to 'wash our hands' at the right moment; the capacity for loyalty, but also for great abandonment and betrayal. (*Pope Francis, 25th March 2018.*)

Ritual Action

Place the branches or pieces of cloth in the sacred space.

Intercessions *Light the Candle*

As we light this candle we take a moment to remember and pray for Christians throughout the world who will celebrate this week as holy. (*Pause*) We pray for our needs and the needs

of the world. We remember in our prayer ... *(Bring your intentions to God)* **Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.**

Our Father ...

Prayer

Loving Father be with us in these days as we recall how the divine goodness of Jesus had to struggle with the darkness of this world. Help us in our own daily struggles to live the life you created us for. Lead us to triumph as Jesus did so that we may always live in your presence. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless us and keep us; The Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us; The Lord turn his face toward us and give us his peace both now and forever. Amen.

Sign of the Cross ...

To do

Place a piece of palm or a green branch on your door to let people know it is Palm Sunday. Post a picture of your sacred space on Social Media (using the hashtag #holyweekathome) and let people know that you are preparing to celebrate the greatest week of the church year. Pick a character from the bible to walk with you through this Holy Week – for example Peter, Mary, Mary Magdalen, one of the Apostles, an ordinary citizen of Jerusalem – try to see what they see, imagine their thoughts and feelings as the events unfold.

