

## **Homily: Palm Sunday, 2023**

**“Being intimate with the Passion of the Lord and experiencing His tremendous Love as we enter, with Faith and Hope, into the ‘Holy Week.’”**

The cute story of little Johnny who was sick on one particular Palm Sunday is worth recounting. His sickness had prevented him from going to Church that day and he had to stay home with his mother. His father returned from church, that Sunday, holding a palm branch. The little boy was curious and asked, “Why do you have that palm branch, dad?” With joy, Daddy replied, “You see, Johnny... When Jesus came into town, everyone waved palm branches to welcome and honor Him; so we got palm branches today” “Aww, Good Lord!” grumbled little Johnny, “The one Sunday I can’t go to church, and Jesus shows up!” The innocence of little Johnny made him to feel that He had missed the Lord when He came to town.

But when we think a little deeper, we also realize that sometimes we are similar. We fail to take notice of the Presence of the Lord very many times! And it’s only when we “feel His absence” that we recognize the depth of “missing His Presence!”

Well Today we are entering into one of the Most important weeks of the Liturgical year. The Holy Week! And we commemorate the start of this Holy Week, with the Passion Sunday, also known as the Palm Sunday. On this Palm Sunday, we recollect the entry of the Lord into the town, riding on a donkey (Cf. Mk 11:7)

The donkey has a specific symbolism. In the olden days, military officers engaged in war and battles would ride on the most efficient animals: the fast and furious warhorses. But after the victory in the war, the victorious officers would parade into

the city riding on... yes, a donkey. That was the reason why the people shouted out when they saw Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

In the First book of the Kings 1: 38-4, we read of how Prince Solomon used the royal donkey of his father David, for the ceremonial procession on the day of his coronation. The new Solomon, Jesus, the True Prince of Peace and the King of Kings today enters His city, Jerusalem on a donkey as well! A new reign of peace was being signaled. A new kingdom of love was being ushered. Are we ready to welcome the King of Kings and the Prince of Peace into our lives? He is not the glorious King of might and wealth. But He is the Spectacular King who will reign on His throne of the Cross. He is not the proud Emperor who parades much show and pomp. But He is the Wonderful Lord who displays His compassion and love by His wounds! Are we ready to welcome this King into...Our lives? Our homes? Our hearts?

The Passion of the Lord is about to begin. Are we going to be part of the people who crucify Him? Or are we going to be people who repent of sins and seek to live a life worthy of the King?

Many of us would have read the following, with a picture of Jesus Christ crucified.

“I asked Jesus, how much do you love me?”

And Jesus answered, “This much”

And He extended His arms on the cross...

But there's a sequel to this, which perhaps is not known much, but is worth reflecting. Jesus then asked me, “How much do you love me” I picked up the hammer and the nails....saying, “This is how much I love You!” And began to crucify Him!

The Passion of the Lord is a result of our sins. The Crucifixion of the Lord is a consequence of our disobedience. As Isaiah would say, “It was our infirmities that He bore and it was our sufferings that He endured” (Is 53:4). He Died for love of us. He suffered to save each of us. Are we going to remain stubborn and adamant and continue to be a people who shout, “Crucify Him”. Or shall we repent, fall on our knees, seek a transformation, and, with palm branches in our hands, truly exclaim and acclaim Jesus as the Lord, shouting, “Hosanna to the King of Kings! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”

Wish you a Blessed Palm Sunday...and a Glorious Holy Week!

Let us try to make this week, a “Holy Week” indeed...repenting over our sins, asking pardon from the Lord and making suitable amendments. Remembering all those people with whom we fail to be in good relation and asking the “gift of forgiveness” from the Lord and making efforts for a healing in these relationships. Let us be intimate with the Passion of the Lord and experience His tremendous love, so that we too may worthily and honestly shout, on Easter Sunday, “Alleluia! He is risen!”