

Sunday, March 29, 2015 – Palm Sunday – Passion of Christ – Mk 14:1-15:47

A lot can happen within just a few days.

SCREEN: [Image – Jesus palms]

Today's liturgy began with the procession of the palms to commemorate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The people welcomed him into the city shouting "Hosanna" – meaning savior, rescuer. They laid cloths and palms on the ground showing him reverence and praise as he processed into the city. There was celebration. There was joy. There was hope. But, within just a few days, there would be a different procession that Jesus would make.

SCREEN: [Image – Jesus carrying cross]

Jesus would be processing carrying a cross. Instead of being met with being welcomed and praised, he would be ridiculed by many people as he processed carrying the cross. The joy and hope from just a few days earlier would seem to have vanished. This savior, this rescuer – what would become of the people now without him? Would they recognize the sacrifice that was taking place before their eyes? Would they recognize God's love in the blood flowing from Jesus, from every nail being hammered into his flesh, and every last word that they would hear Jesus proclaim from the cross upon which he was dying before their eyes?

SCREEN: [Image – A lot can happen in just three days]

The words we just experienced in the Passion of our Lord, and this Holy Week in which we are entering, should be the most powerful week in the life of all Christians. A powerful week that if we truly enter into how our Lord wants us to experience these next seven days, then they will forever change our lives.

Whether you remained true to your Lenten promises you made on Ash Wednesday, or fell short of them, that is now in the past. Today is the day to enter into this week focused on experiencing in a profound way the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This Holy Thursday will begin the Triduum. On Thursday at 7 pm we will celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper. A night we commemorate the gifts of the Eucharist, the Priesthood, and our call to service. We will have 12 of our parishioners that are from our various mission activities to have their feet washed as a remembrance of when Jesus washed his Apostles feet. When Jesus taught them that we are all called to serve God by serving each other.

On Friday during the day we will have living Stations of the Cross at 1 pm and regular Stations of the Cross at 3 pm. Then at 7 pm on Good Friday we will celebrate the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion. One of the most solemn liturgies in

the year of the Church when we proclaim the Passion of our Lord, venerate the cross to remember the cross upon which he was nailed and took his last breath among us, and receive Holy Communion.

Holy Saturday is then a day of quiet and prayerful preparation to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord. Then on Saturday at 8 pm, our Easter Vigil Liturgy will start in front of the school entrance with lighting the Easter fire and the new Pascal Candle. We process with that light of Christ into the dark church spreading that light to everyone holding their own candle that represents that light of our Lord. We then hear the story of salvation proclaimed, and then celebrate before our eyes Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist for new members coming into our parish as full Catholic members of our faith. A reminder to each of us of how precious the Sacraments given to us by Jesus Christ are in our lives. The Resurrection of our Lord continues to be celebrated then on Sunday at our normal Sunday Mass times.

This year, our children's worship SLAM, as well as babysitting, will be available on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil, and the 9 am and 11:30 am Masses on Sunday. When you leave Mass today, please pick up our Take-Away that gives you all the details about the liturgies of the Triduum and Easter.

If you truly allow yourself to enter into and experience this Holy Week, I promise you that the joy and grace you will feel when we celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter will be all the more greater. The Passion of Jesus Christ reminds us that Jesus bled and died for each of us. Let us give him the time to show our thankfulness for this gift that is beyond measure. And, if we do, what we receive from him in our lives is far greater than anything else we could ever attain in this world – what we receive from him forever changes our lives. May each of you have a blessed Holy Week in growing closer to our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen!