

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion



Service, surrender, and steadfast commitment to what is true are all themes at the heart of this week's Palm Sunday Gospel Reading. 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:

*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 week, 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 week, 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 shows Jesus' honest expression of pain, trust, surrender, and willingness to complete his mission. Perhaps we've found similar strength among the agony of our darkest hour while wishing away the cup of our addictive and compulsive behavior. We can make the same kind of humble surrender in matters big and small by praying, "Thy will, not mine, be done." It may need to be repeated often, but no set of circumstances are too small or too big to invite God into.

Jesus is condemned, accused, and betrayed by nearly all who he came across in the final days of his life. Throughout this time, his empathy remained strong and his steadfast commitment to his mission was not altered. His body became weak but his spirit was full of life and love until his last breath.

Now is a great time to renew our faith in Christ by serving him and others through obedient surrender and by remaining devoted to the commitments we've made to our recovery and spiritual way of life. The devotions we have crafted throughout Lent can spring us into a deeper relationship with God and launch our recovery to new heights.

We take action by working through the Twelve Steps, calling to mind our powerlessness and need for a savior. We will be invited to reaffirm our sacramental vows during the Easter celebration where we will unify our faith with the newly baptized, just as we unify our recovery with the newcomer that joins our fellowship.

If your cross seems to become too heavy to carry on your own, reach out for help. In a moment of difficulty, enter the passion of Jesus and prayerfully recite the words, "Thy will, not mine, be done." Honest recognition of our situation through prayer invites our Savior to journey with us as we accept his invitation to carry our cross daily.

Reflection Questions

- What have you set your sights on during Lent that you have yet to complete?
 - Is there an amends to make, 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 the Church and to recovery?
 - How do the testimonies of others help you carry your cross daily?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7

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

2nd Reading: Philippians 2:6-11

Gospel: Luke 22:14–23:56