

## **Palm Sunday Pre-Retreat Reflection (April 10, 2022)**

This Sunday we celebrate Palm Sunday. In the days following Palm Sunday, we journey with Jesus during his final days here on earth. We remember his passion, death, and resurrection. We will rise with him.

During these weeks we have been preparing with those who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This is an opportunity for all of us who are baptized in Christ to renew our commitment to him. At the heart of our faith is God's commitment to us in sending his only son to die for us. God's passion is that we will be one with Him. Jesus enters into our history to show us what it really means to be human. In essence, he shows us that sometimes we will be praised by the crowd and at the moment he needed them the most, they will shout- crucify him!

The Gospel tells us that Jesus enters triumphantly into Jerusalem riding on a borrowed donkey. Jesus was greeted by the crowds as they praised God and shouted "Hosanna!" All four Gospels record this event. This year we read the passion from Luke's Gospel. In the reading of the Passion, we hear the details of several events: Jesus' Last Supper, his prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, Judas's betrayal, the arrest of Jesus, Peter's denial of Jesus, and how Jesus was accused and sentenced to death. Through Jesus' death, we have been set free for holiness and life. Let's prayerfully listen to the reading of this Gospel. When Jesus died on the cross, he felt abandoned and alone, and he cried out to God. In his death, Jesus identified with all those who feel alone and abandoned in our world.

As a Church and as individual Christians, we are called to look for ways to reach out to all those who feel alone, to share with them God's love and care. In the Gospel passage that we read today. Jesus' disciples do not show themselves as models of faith. As we look at their actions, we wonder if they can really continue Jesus' ministry after his death.

At the Last Supper, the disciples all said that they would not betray Jesus. He comforted them even though their faith was shaken. Peter protested and said, "Lord, I will never betray you." Peter denied Jesus, and the disciples were not present during Jesus' passion and death. Only the women who had been followers of Jesus in Galilee are said to have been present at the Crucifixion, but they remained at a distance. In spite of this, Jesus still loves us and says we will be with him in God's kingdom.

During this Holy Week, let us reflect on how strong is our faith in Jesus when we see him suffering under the weight of the Cross? Are we still willing to stand by him even when it seems impossible for him to get out of this situation? Have we forgotten all the times we saw miracles happen and how God removed us from situations that could cause us harm? Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

